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C O N T E N T S

ISSUE #9

APRIL 1987



EDITORIAL

"Hey, what's this? Where am I? This isn't *Adventurer*, is it? Oh, yes, but where is the scroll, and the big sword, and... oops! What's that guy doing over my head. Hey! You nearly hit me then!

Hmmm... wonder what else is new this month. Well for starters, there's a 4-page pull-out opinion poll. I'll bet that gets a few strong comments. Oh, look, and an interview with David Brin, the SF author, and some rather nice pictures of cats' eyes. And some juicy gossip from Marshie, no doubt; I must read that later, but first I'll visit the *Once Bitten*.

Three pages!! Oh, come on, Robin, I'll never follow all that; it looks funny, though, especially that fellow with the funny... Ahem! There's the readers."

Ah. Welcome, everybody, to the new-look *Adventurer*. There's been so many changes in this issue that we were thinking of calling it something else, but since there's no better name than "*Adventurer*", we decided not to. Anyway, I hope you like it.

Ste. D.

Ste Dillon.

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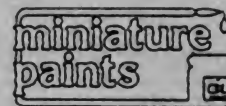
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'WHAT IS PLAY BY MAIL?'

First off this month, I would like to extend many thanks to all the **Adventurer** readers who attended the **Second British Play By Mail Conference** at the Porchester Hall on 7/2/87 and voted this magazine into equal third place in the "Best Coverage Of P.B.M." category. This is no mean feat since we have only been covering P.B.M. for four issues (as I write this) and it would seem that next year we will have the other magazines that cover P.B.M. looking over their shoulder!

Talking about the conference, I can confirm that it was an overwhelming success! Over 1000 P.B.M.'ers from all over Europe attended and had a field day checking out all the new and established P.B.M. companies who were displaying many different games. There was always something for people to do. If you had examined all the different P.B.M.s, you could go on a real life dungeon adventure, visit the bar, purchase various SF and Fantasy books, or examine the latest board games and dungeon accessories which were displayed by **Games People Play**. Even if you did all this, you could always sit down and chat to any one of the hundreds of P.B.M.'ers who were there, and either make alliances or break them.

At the death, we had sold out of both food and beer, so about a hundred or so people that were hanging around cleared out of the hall and headed for the nearest hostelry, where they chatted the night away. As per last year, I lost my voice for the following three days!

Right, now on with the column proper. This month loads of different and new P.B.M. games have sprung up catering for everybody's tastes, and I can offer you special discounts for most of them.

First off is "**Further Into Fantasy**", a new single-character fantasy game, with a touch of SF. You may well have seen this game mentioned in a previous edition of **Adventurer**. Well, I also saw it mentioned (Ste tells me nothing you see!) and it looked so good I decided to play it. When I received my start-up package, the rulebook caught my eye immediately. It is well produced, with loads of good quality artwork as well as easy to read

rules. Furthermore, you also get a copy of the first newsletter called "**What's Stirring**", which contains helpful hints, tips and ideas for you to use. You have the choice of three character classes to play: **Warrior**, **Priest** or **Sage**. Each has its own benefits, but it is up to you to make the most of them by allocating your initial start up points carefully. You could end up as a warrior with no combat skill!

I've now played the game itself for quite a few turns, and I am mightily impressed. I have a G.M. called Paul, who is one of the three full time G.M.s used to run the game; he has delighted me with his straightforward, no-nonsense style.

There are no boring descriptions of the weather you encounter on your travels. Up tempo, action packed stuff is what you'll find here! This, combined with loads of maps, 'wanted' posters and really evil monsters adds up to a great game. My character, a sage called **Labo**, has already fallen foul of a nasty sect of snake worshippers, and they are sending out a few of their magical snakes to get me. I've actually witnessed a member of their sect **devour** a young child. The background in the game is first rate stuff.

Add this to the fact that this is a 'Discover the rules as you go along' type game, and you can see why I am rather excited about it. The start up fee is usually £5.00, but all you **Adventurer** readers can start up for only £3.50, and also get three free rounds! Further rounds are nicely priced at £1.20. All cheques, P.O.s to be made payable to:-

The Laboratory, Box 66, 19 Colbourne Street, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 2EQ.

The second offer I have for you this month is on a game called "**The Hunting**". This P.B.M. is quite unique and I personally find it a great pleasure to play. Set on a planet called **Felbin**, which underwent a nuclear war, you start off in one of (possibly the only!) the surviving cities called **Endlethorn**. However, this is not your usual type of city, as you will soon find that it is surrounded by 300ft high walls which are 80ft wide,

and the only way in or out is via one of the twelve massive gates spread around the walls! When you read the rule book, you discover that your character is in a city designed to keep people in, not out! What has happened is that the powers that be, who rule the remains of the devastated plant, have decided that the city would make an ideal place to put all the murderers, muggers, rapists and various other anti-social elements. Of course, the poor old citizens who lived in the city before **Endlethorn** became a prison were not moved out and are trying to live a 'normal' lifestyle. However, this proves virtually impossible, with large contingents of criminals running riot; it is impossible to maintain law and order. The government realise this, so they appoint vigilantes to go in and sort things out. These people are called **Exterminators**, and this is where you have to make your first, and most important choice...

You see, this game gives you the option of playing a character that is either a **Criminal** or an **Exterminator**, and it is your job to act accordingly. If you choose to play an **Exterminator**, you start off at a distinct advantage as you have access to weapons, armour and other important items. Furthermore, you have a communicator, which enables you to tune into 'Sweet Home'. This is a 'female' computer which you can contact and she will answer any questions you have, and keep you up to date with any new info. You are then set loose in the city to track down any criminals and bring them to justice. The usual method is to kill them, decapitate them and then take their heads to the gates, where you will receive a bounty for your services, which in turn will enable you to purchase better armour and weapons. However, if you choose to play a **criminal**, you start off with 20 velgars (Gold pieces to you), a blanket, and the clothes on your back. You are then physically thrown into the city and are expected to survive!

One of the most interesting aspects of the game is that whatever character you play, you can have a mutation if you wish to expend enough of your 300 creation points to obtain it. The

mutation can be anything from the power of telekenisis to having three arms. When choosing a mutation, I would advise you to think carefully as some mutations can be deadly to the mutant itself.

The game is really interesting with over 750, very detailed, A4 maps to collect, over 100 weapons to use (all weapons have a corresponding token telling you all the details you need to know i.e. reliability, damage inflicted, size etc.) as well as over 1000 non player characters to interact with. Furthermore, parts of the city are like a Rome under the rule of Julius Caesar, whilst others are like Dodge City under the control of Wild Bill Hickock, with real cowboys and gunfights!

The cost of the start up pack in **The Hunting** usually costs £5.00, but **Adventurer** readers can join for the reduced price of £4.50 AND get 5 free rounds. Each following round costs a reasonable £1.50.

However, the first five readers to write in to **D.M.C. Games** will have

their cheques returned to them and will be able to start up and have five free rounds for **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING**. So get writing:-

D.M.C. Games, 2 Pemberton Rd., Basingstoke, Hants. RG21 2LW.

Finally, there is a new computer moderated game to finish off with. "**Shattered World**" is a new game from **Jade Games**, the company that brought you that unique game called '**Arcadia**'. In this game, you are the Commander of the **Tetralith**, a gigantic hover-pyramid, on the planet **Flindar**. A rogue moon called **Phosphor** has entered into **Flindar's** orbit and has caused world-wide destruction. The sea has flooded large chunks of the planet, regular earthquakes leave gaping holes in the planet's crust, volcanoes spring up from nowhere and in general, things look pretty grim! To survive, you need your **Tetralith**, and this needs a special mineral to function.

Needless to say, this mineral is in short supply and you have to fight or negotiate say, with miners, warriors, degenerating and mutating humans plus strange creatures that originate from **Phosphor** itself. Also, there is a mysterious plateau where it is rumoured that the secret of the planet's salvation can be found, and it is up to you to try and find it.

The start up pack, which includes a large wall-sized hex map for you to map your moves, usually costs £5.00, but once again **Adventurer** readers will be able to obtain all this for a reduced price of £2.50. All cheques, P.O.s payable to **Jade Games** please. You should note that this game has fixed deadlines:-

Jade Games, FREEPOST, Southsea, Hants. PO4 0BR.

Well that's all this month, see you again in thirty, and next time I hope to be giving away start up packs and free rounds!

Wayne Bootleg.

BOMBER

GHULOID KUNTORATIONS
—BRING FORTH
MY FAMILIAR---

—DARK POWERS OF
THE NIGHT AIR—STIR
FORTH THY EVIL---

—HEAR ME, O DARKNESS,
—YOU WILL BRING ME
MY DEMON—



—DARKNESS?---

DAMMIT.
CREATION—
—COME FORTH!

NO!!

—NOT UNTIL
WE GET
A FULL PAGE..



The initial idea for this diorama was inspired by Grenadler's 'Pet Dragons', a pair of wedding cake decorations and a desire to create a scene rather more tranquil than the usual fantasy 'Thud and Blunder'.

The pillars suggested a patio or courtyard setting, while a search through my 'spares box' turned up a number of figures suitable for representing the 'Ladies of the Court' and their pets.

As I have said, the pillars are wedding

cake decorations which are available in various shapes and sizes from card shops. The ones I used are plastic and cost about 35p each.

These were simply glued on to a plastic card base and then washed with thinned Tetragon filler to give a rough stone finish. They were then undercoated with a mix of mucky green paint and 'dry brushed' roughly with yellow ochre, cream and white to give a marble effect.

The paving slabs were made from the

same type of plastic card as the base, cut into small squares and glued down with a small space between each one - just like tiling a wall. These were again washed with Tetragon, undercoated grey and washed with thinned black ink, highlights were applied with medium grey and white acrylic. Gaps were left in the paving for the two 'rockeries' which were made, quite simply, from stone chippings (for the rocks) and Tetragon (for the earth); the plants (made from parcel string) were set into the filler while it was still wet.



The diorama showing the Lord Of The Rings boxed set is a good example of what can be achieved quite simply, just by sticking to a theme. In this case the Fellowship are under attack from a couple of wargs.



Dragon:

The stones were painted, rather than left in their natural state, to give them a more weathered appearance and were highlighted with touches of pale green and yellow to represent moss.

The base was finished with a pair of 'patio tubs' which were made from short lengths of $\frac{1}{2}$ " plastic pipe washed in Tetrion; the fir trees (bought rather than home made) were fixed in place using filler.

The figures themselves needed very little conversion, requiring only the removal of a staff from the hand of the female holding the chain, and the bases of the figures. Most of the base can be removed by trimming it with a pair of wire cutters, a very sharp knife or even a junior hacksaw.

Final trimming should be done VERY GENTLY with a file to avoid marking the figure or snapping off the legs, which at this stage are quite fragile.

Great care should also be taken to avoid cutting, trimming or filing parts of your own anatomy (believe me I KNOW!).

To make mounting more secure, I glued a short length of wire into the bottom of each figure, which was then fixed into a



hole drilled into the base of the diorama.

To insert the wire into the figure, you will have to bore a hole using a very narrow drill bit ($\frac{1}{16}$ " or smaller) mounted in a pin vice or small modeller's drill. This part is quite difficult, especially when drilling up a single leg (!!) so be careful and mind your fingers.

The dragon's 'lead' was a piece of chain from an old 'St Christophers' medal cut to length and glued in position (fine chain is also available commercially from specialist model shops).

As a last 'finishing touch' the diorama was glued to a polished wooden plinth and labelled with an engraved brass plate.

Left: the **Great Hairy One**, *General of the Tyrant's Unspoken Armament* is actually Grenadier's **Tsathoggua** (pack #223) being carried by his **Flesh Golems** slaves (from pack #116). Keeping him cool is a **Grenadier kobold** from set 155.



More Deadly than the Male

WOMEN IN THE HOBBY:

I often feel very much in a minority at rolegaming conventions. I can't get away from the fact that there are very few female rolegamers. In fact, there are few women in the majority of **games**; there are, for instance, very few top class women chess players. This is usually put down to inherent psychological differences; to women being naturally less aggressive and competitive, less able to deal with abstractions and strategies. Even accepting this somewhat doubtful hypothesis, it does not explain the lack of female players of rolegames. Given this view of female nature, rolegames ought to be uniquely attractive to women, since they involve more than just tactics and abstractions. Rather, they are frequently more cooperative than competitive, and involve a large degree of creativity. My experience is that a surprising number of women do get 'hooked' by rolegames once they get involved.

THE IMAGE PROBLEM:

The problem is that the image of FRP games does not appeal to women, since it usually suggests that all role-playing games are for violence-obsessed boys and men. Personally, I believe that women are less violent than men, (yes I know there are exceptions as well, but I'm talking in generalities here) so I am not surprised that there are few women **wargamers**. Unfortunately, wargames and rolegames are still synonymous to many people outside the hobby. This is partly due to historical reasons; fantasy games did after all arise originally out of wargaming. However, as the hobby has matured, it has become a separate entity, and is now often embarrassed by its link with its juvenile progenitor, the wargame.

Then there is the fantasy and science fiction input to the games. F&SF are often seen, certainly by the games companies, as a largely **male** interest, and the publicity is designed to appeal only to a **male** audience. However, this is perhaps a false impression; my experience is that many women are interested in the genre too.

As an example, I first encountered the writer **Terry Pratchett** when 'The Colour of Magic' was read a few years

ago as the serial on Radio 4's **Women's Hour** (!). A second **Pratchett** novel was recently broadcast, so presumably the first was well received. The interesting point is that **The Colour of Magic** in particular, could not be properly appreciated without some knowledge of, or at least interest in, the wider fantasy genre. For that matter, **Adventurer's** own **Wendy Graham** (not to mention the multitude of female SF writers) illustrates that women can be involved in science fiction.

THE GREAT ALL-MALE MARKET:

The effect of the hobby being seen as a male preserve is that the bulk of the audience for RPGs are adolescent males; probably the most **sexist** section of society. (Fortunately, most of them grow out of it.) At this age (12-16) few boys want **real** girls of a similar age around, (although many do express a juvenile, and largely ignorant interest in sex).

Because they appear to be the majority of gamers, and therefore are the market that must be targetted by the games companies, this leads to most of the publicity and commercial advertising being aimed almost exclusively at this group. This gives a self-reinforcing circle that must be broken for any other section of society to be drawn into the hobby.

THE ALL-MALE IMAGE:

The current situation has unfortunate effects on the presentation (in particular the artwork) of game covers and magazines (aside from **Adventurer**, of course!), which either show no women at all, or show women as projections of male adolescent sexual fantasy. In terms of putting off potential female interest, I'm not sure which strategy is worse:

1. If no women are shown on the cover, the assumption will usually be that the contents are for boys.

2. When women are shown, they are rarely shown in ways calculated to attract the interest of women and girls. It's not so much the number of inches of exposed flesh (although would you go orc-hunting wearing a stainless-steel bikini and not a lot else? And yes, I would say the loin-clothed male is just

as ridiculous!), but that the images of women usually have nothing to do with women's and girl's own dreams and fantasies. For instance, most fantasy art women seem to have chest measurements of 40"+, pandering to the standard adolescent obsession, yet the majority of women would like to be slimmer than they actually are. The female ideal of feminine beauty is, I'm afraid, different to that of the typical adolescent male.

The artists seem particularly bad at depicting female faces (maybe they're not interested in them?), and usually revert to either the arrogant minx or the wide-eyed childish innocent expression. Why are games companies unwilling (or unable) to show women in positions of power without making them villains, or to show women who are dressed for what they are doing, rather than to attract men?

All fantasy art and games are about dreams, and people are bound to be idealised in some way. When the artists show **male** characters on products or magazines, they are in effect saying "Wouldn't YOU like to be this dragon-slaying Hero?". The female images, in contrast, are not aimed in the same way at women and girls. Instead, they fall into two groups:

They are either simply to give further excitement to the male observers ("When you slay the dragon you get one of these free!" seems to be the message) or they are shown as villainesses to be 'conquered', however you want to interpret that... No wonder such images don't appeal to women and girls!

Games Workshop are particularly bad in their choice of artwork. The old **Avalon Hill** box cover for **Runequest III** showed an intelligently dressed warrior-woman who actually looked like she could (and would) fight! The new Games Workshop printing, however, replaces her with an all-male cover stressing chaos, gore and violence. The Workshop cannot (or will not) show images of women reflecting female wish-fulfilment. They seem incapable of showing a non-surrealistic woman who is not a 'pin-up'. Therefore, presumably so as not to offend the parents of their younger customers, they have played safe, and ignored women entirely. Given this and their total dedication to bloodshed and mass carnage at the expense of the more creative aspects of the hobby, I find it difficult to avoid

the conclusion that GW are actively trying to discourage female participation.

On a more positive note, SOME of the TSR artwork seems to be reaching a reasonable compromise between male and female idealisations of women. A number of the female images in the TSR Art Book are superb. Of particular note are *Alerielean* (originally from *Dragon* #94), and *'Moon Dragon Summer.'* (I stress that I'm merely talking about the quality of the artwork, not the contents of the product!) I will generously ignore some of the less pleasing examples, such as *Ravenloft 2*. Isn't that nice of me?

IT FIGURES:

A related problem is that of figures. These are again important to the image of the hobby because they frequently form the most imposing display in a shop. Unfortunately, again, the range of figures available is hardly calculated to attract female players. I accept that commercial realities dictate that the proportion of female figures reflects the number of female players. The real problem is the forms that those few figures take!

Firstly, no woman in her right mind is going to go into battle bare chested, especially if she is built in the proportions that most female figures are. They'd simply get in the way, flopping all over the place... Similarly, women are as likely to want to cover the rest of their bodies as men. (And who decided that the most sensible way to armour a woman is to wear sauce-pan lids on her chest? If nothing else, they would be extremely painful!). Women can pick their clothing with as much sense as men: so why aren't the figures intelligently garbed?

While we're on the subject for that matter, I heartily recommend that some designers go to anatomy classes to learn what the human body looks like! Oh, and could whoever designed the AD&D female thief for *Citadel* please note that you cannot see the shape of a woman's nipples through leather armour!!

I seem to be spending a lot of time criticising Games Workshop in this article, but once again, in the shape of *Citadel*, they are the worst offenders. The trouble is, they have a near monopoly of the outlets outside the big cities, and so can get away with almost anything, however lousy. What's even more depressing is that they have got worse over the last few years. About four years ago, I was able to buy almost a complete set of female adventurer types in just one visit to Nottingham, and the majority were

(fairly) reasonably dressed and proportioned. Now, finding a single reasonably dressed figure is a cause for celebration. Have they lost the designers who did the *Chalana Arroy* and *Elrithra* adventuresses from the *RuneQuest* set? Or are they all working on chaos mutant ninja death wombats?

To be fair, though, there are a few companies that are making good female figures. Particularly worth a mention are some of the *Prince August* range, despite the use of the word 'girl' to describe them (can we expect to see boys-of-arms figures?) Take a look at the *Enchantress*, elf girl (sic), and girl thief (sic) figures, not to mention the excellent female hobbit. Also deserving some praise is *Grenadier Models*, who have actually remembered that female monsters must exist, (giants, a mummy, and a kobold to name but three).

THE FEMALE ELEMENT:

However, the general public image of the hobby tends to have the all boys together 'rugby club' ethos. This can be very intimidating, and make it very difficult for girls (particularly those in the younger age range) to get involved. To go into a shop or a club where everyone else is of the opposite sex can require a lot of courage. (Male readers: imagine gate-crashing a *Women's Institute* meeting or going into a lingerie shop!!!)

Perhaps all this is why those women who ARE involved are often older than the men: I know a number of women in their thirties who discovered the hobby through their teenage sons, only later becoming hooked in their own right. I got involved with a group at university, and was an addict after the first session! It is also notable that, given the small total number of female players, there is an extremely high percentage involved in creating commercial material, or refereeing at conventions. It seems that what needs encouraging is the body of the less involved and younger women and girls. I have never met a female 'Munchkin' or 'Irving'!

Does any of this matter? After all, if the male players are happy gaming without women and girls, why not let things be?

Firstly, it seems grossly unfair that women who might be interested are put off by *externals*. Presumably this is bad for the games companies as well.

Secondly, my male gamer friends, (in particular my husband), tell me that having female players has a profound effect on the game. (My knowledge of

all-male games is, of course, somewhat limited!). In general, having a female player or two leads to a stronger emphasis on role playing and less on monster killing. Women are less likely to become power gamers, obsessed with gaining high levels and at 'winning' at all costs. All-male groups tend to be more aggressive, in vain attempts to out-Macho each other! (I apologise to those all-male groups who have outgrown such childishness). Also, all-male groups tend to demonstrate more in-party competitiveness (OK in *Paranoia*, but often a pain in the neck in other games) for no real reason.

My own view is that getting more women into the hobby would be a beneficial goal, both because of the effect they have on games and because of the pleasure the women themselves will get from being involved.

SEX DIFFERENCES:

There are differences, both physical and psychological between men and women. Saying this is not the same as saying one is superior to the other, but both have different qualities. To use a gaming analogy, no one would argue over whether dwarves or elves are superior. They are simply *different*, with different strengths and weaknesses. Many games reflect these differences in their mechanics, but they do seem more willing to reflect feminine *weaknesses* than feminine *strengths*.

In general, women have less brute strength than do men. Most games do restrict female strength in some way on these grounds. This is reasonable: You don't find many female Geoff Capes's around! However, *RuneQuest* is far too harsh with a maximum female strength of 14 (on scale for men of 3-18). It then makes a nonsense of the whole issue by saying you can ignore the limit for PCs. What's so special about PCs? Any peasant woman, working in the fields all day, has as much chance of developing her strength as any adventurer.

However, if women have less strength, they are frequently tougher in many ways. (How many men could stand the pain of child-birth?). Physiologically, there is an extra layer of fat beneath the skin, making them less vulnerable to extremes of temperature. If you use a system that restricts female strength in the name of realism, you really ought to consider boosting female constitution on the same grounds!

To digress slightly, the apparent frailty is often due to extraneous matters. Historically, 'respectable'

female clothing has often been **designed** apparently to **restrict** female activities: long, full, skirts, high heels, large numbers of petticoats and later, tight corsetting and the rest are hardly calculated to facilitate physical activity!

Also, historically, the differences in the upbringing of boys and girls leads to differences. Girls stayed in and learnt needlework, whilst their brothers learnt horse riding and sword play. At various times in history, most recently in Victorian times, (but also earlier,) it simply wasn't *respectable* for a woman to be too healthy. To be sickly was a sign of beauty, so respectable women often pretended such.

Finally, many women (including myself), do on occasions take **advantage** of their presumed frailty, and get their menfolk to do the heavy work!

Another aspect of feminine toughness is the fact that women often remain at their physical peak for longer than men. For example, female athletes often maintain their peak well into their mid and late thirties, long after their male equivalents are 'over-the-hill'.

A second area where women have the edge over men is in **manual dexterity**. In general, women are more nimble-fingered than men. A system which separates manual dexterity and agility ought to allow for this, or perhaps women ought to get a bonus for manual dexterity based skills, such as picking pockets and opening locks. As far as I know, there is no evidence of consistent gender differences in physical agility. My instinct and general observations suggest that if anything, women have the edge here as well.

PSYCHE DIFFERENCES:

More controversial are the assumed psychological sex differences. At the risk of annoying some members of my own sex, I believe that there are differences between the sexes, although these are exaggerated by environmental factors. However, I emphasise again that these make us different, not (necessarily) superior. I also accept that many men display these feminine qualities, just as many women display masculine ones. Of course, bringing these aspects out is a matter of good **roleplaying** rather than game **mechanics**. A couple of points are worth looking at in detail:-

Women tend to think with the **whole** of their minds, the emotional parts as well as the reasoning parts. This means they can frequently see connections that are not necessarily obvious to

men, often leading to different solutions to problems and insights to situations (the so-called feminine intuition).

Another important difference is in the **attitudes** of women to relationships and sex. It is extremely unusual for a woman to take a '**scalp hunting**' attitude to such things. She is also generally less concerned with the purely physical attributes of a potential partner, more with his personality and nature. All through this section, I have been discussing **human** women. There is no reason why sex differences in other races should be expressed in the same way. Some races may have no differences beyond those related to biological function, but that could make life very boring.

CROSS-SEX ROLEPLAYING:

Playing a character of the opposite sex, and doing it well, is both extremely difficult and extremely rewarding. It is more difficult than playing a member of an imaginary race because, whilst it is difficult to criticise another's interpretation of, say, an elf, we have a better idea of what men and women are like. I have seen male players playing female characters, and make them behave as no woman would, simply because they were still thinking as a man. For example, in my campaign a sorceress accepted an invitation from a sorcerer with a 'bad reputation' to visit him in the evening to discuss a matter of mutual concern. The player was startled when it transpired that by accepting the invitation, the sorceress had lost any protection she might have had from the town authorities. In merely visiting him alone, she is asking for whatever she gets, in the eyes of that society.

On a deeper level, playing a character of the opposite sex can be a fascinating experience. If you let yourself do it properly, I think you can learn a lot about the other half of the human race.

I also have no doubt that if I don't think about what I'm doing, I make an equally bad job of playing male characters! To be fair, it is easier for a woman to play the role of a man, since fiction and films provide us with a multitude of male role-models to base our characters on. There are few equivalent female role-models. Playing a character of the opposite sex is not easy. A lot of male players need reminding that calling a character female, adding some curves to her description, and adding a make-up pack to her equipment does not create a female character!



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Dockside

The Waterways and Docksidess of Scatophagium
by Robin Parry and Ste Dillon.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION:

Following on from our guided tour of Scatophagium last issue (and I hope you all subscribed to that little excursion), I thought that the more inquisitive adventurers might like to make their own excursion to visit the rivers and dockside of Scat. itself, so bring your waterproofs and galloshes along! **GMs:** Have your players got their colour guide books out? (See *Adventurer* #5) Oh, well, we have printed a 'pocket-sized' version of the dockside on the next page. The full colour map may be useful though.

THE RIVER SCAT:

The River Scat. is home to a number

of creatures, and markedly different populations inhabit the river above and below town. Before the river reaches Scat., observant types can spot a variety of **fishes**; trout, perch, and sticklebacks. Feeding off these are flocks of heron, kingfishers and dippers. Among the more exotic creatures, we have the famous Scat. **river-pigs**. These aggressive looking creatures are hippopotamus-like swine of a glossy brown hue. The young are about the size of piglets, but they grow quickly to the stature of a mule in only a year. These can be found wallowing in shallow sections of the river, and have all but vanished from the immediate Scat. area

through over-hunting; River-pig flesh is a delicacy not to be missed! The **Carellian Pike** which inhabit the river agree on this point; these are voracious, predatory fish large enough to take young river-swine at one gulp. Evil-tempered and ugly, these solitary fish are rare (fortunately), and although normally only 6'-10', tales report sightings of 15' creatures!

The **Spitting Frog** and **Blurred Newt** are the favourite prey of the **Net Viper**, an aquatic snake whose jaws disconnect and spread wide a net of membranous tissues for scooping up food at a remarkable swimming speed.





Other life-forms include the odd **cormorant** and the extraordinarily friendly **otters**.

The river flow is relatively slow, but is greater at late autumn and early spring, when lowlying lands can often be flooded. It is navigable by deep draught vessels for 30 miles, up to the point known as **Pig Rock**, because of the shape of a large overhanging boulder. This marks the first ford or natural crossing point of the River from Scat.

West of the Scat., the river is naturally more polluted by the industrial and urban waste from the town. Fresh (?) water crabs inhabit the estuary, **Scatmouth**, and all the river up to the town. There is one notable species, the **Spider Crab**, which can grow up to 30' from claw tip to claw tip. Like all crabs, this one is carnivorous (...!)

Apart from the inevitable fish, notable denizens of this section of the river also include vicious metre-long worms called **Cruppers**. These creatures live in the mud, and are the bane of fishers and sailors alike, thanks to their special ability of swarming swiftly up something dangled in the water, such as a line or a net, or a plumb or an anchor. Of course, the players won't know about these creatures, and unless they're asking deliberately, might only discover **Mr. Crupper** when fishing! What a lunch that could turn out to be (whoever wins!).

Skua and **gannet** are seen in the town, and inhabit the estuary in great numbers.

The river traffic consists of the merchant cogs and the dhow-like craft of the fishers, with occasional visiting crafts such as **Apan Baggala** (galleon/dhow), as well as galleons

from **Eado** or **Fulthess**.

Barges and galleys ply the river within the town, moving goods and passengers downstream on the current, and upstream by sail, tacking to the prevailing Northwesterly winds.

Unless a mast can be lowered, the river is impassable to larger sailing ships beyond the **West Bridge**, which gives a 12' clearance above high water level. **Bazaar Bridge** gives only a 10' clearance.

The River Scat. can be quite smelly on warm summer days when the water level is low. Apart from the natural waste from the town, there is a growing anti-social habit of hurling the heads of defeated enemies into the river. This is an effort to prevent the return of the dead for revenge.

SHIP-BUILDING:

The fishers, who were here before it was known as Scatophagium, have always built ships on the banks of the river, obtaining teak and oak from the (then) nearby forest. The wood is fashioned by hand and eye, and tied together in **Carvel** style, with stout fibres. The hulls are then rubbed with goat fat and lime below the waterline to discourage barnacles and worm. From the smallest **Lansh** to the large **Booms**, these craft are all lateen sailed, and the commonest of these vessels is a small, single-masted 20-footer.

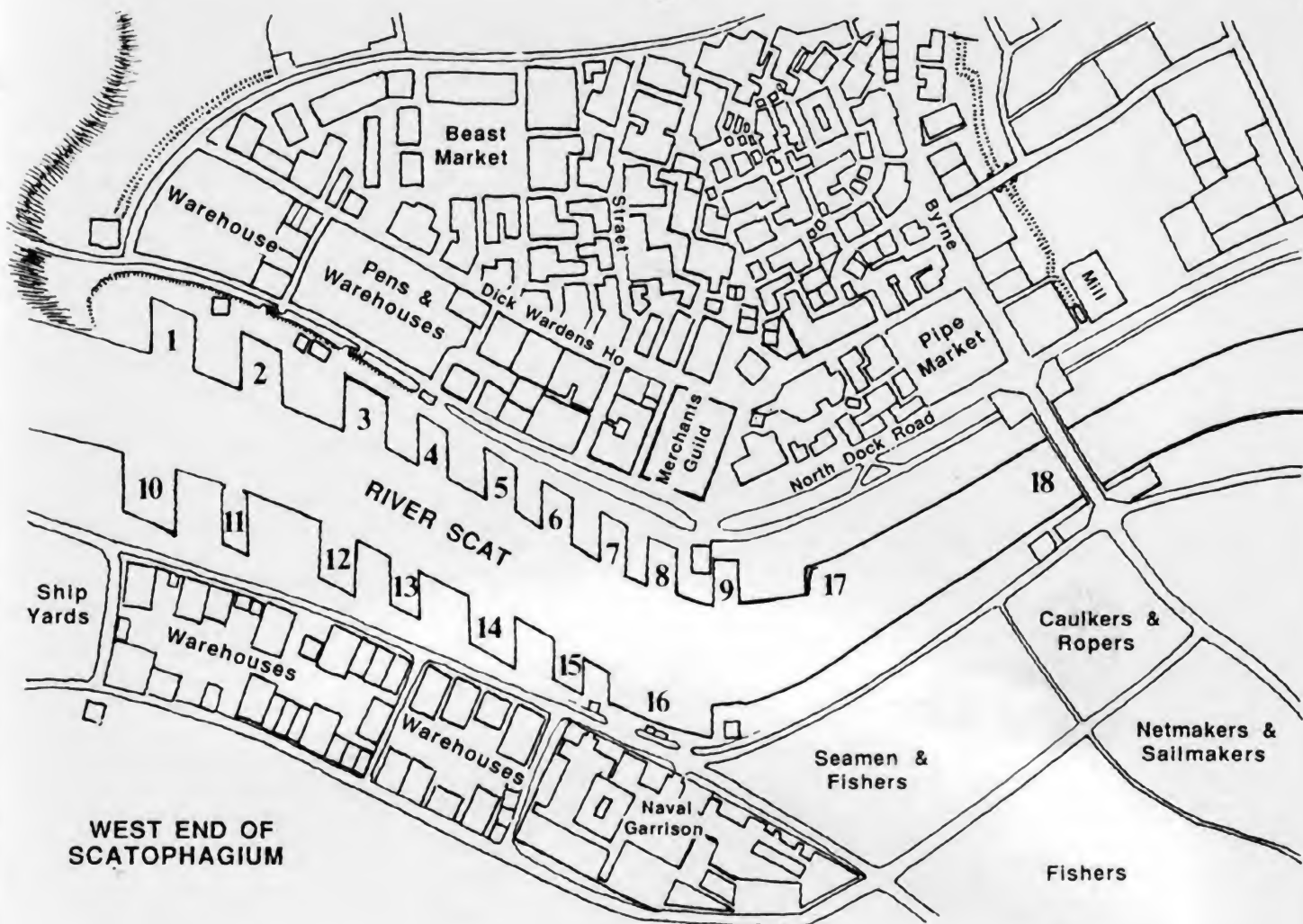
In recent years, the building of ships by the fishers has seen a decline. Wood must be bought from the mill, and the fishers are not prosperous.

The vessels built by the fishers are dhow-like, as are most of the craft built on the southern shores of the **Ladrone Sea** and in the **Gulf of Apa**. The Northern style, in contrast, favours clinker-built cogs and galleons, and shipwrights with these skills were among the first settlers in Scat. after **Cathetus Vertex** founded the town in 17,425.

Timber is felled in villages east of the town and transported via oxen teams by road, or by barge down the river to the town. Here, it is cut at one of two timber mills. The four small shipyards in Scat. are seldom all in production, and half-a-dozen new ships per year is the average. The boatwrights use pegs and nails to secure timbers, and build square sailed **cogs** with fore and after-castles.

Some of the Fisher boatwrights have moved to the yards, and their skills combined with those of the northern immigrants has produced some fine hybrid vessels, incorporating the best of the two styles.

The most numerous vessels in the Scat. area are the fishers' **Lansh** and **Booms**. The former outnumber the



latter 10:1, and overall numbers are hard to estimate, with the fishers pulling their boats up on the shores of the estuary and banks of the river. Frequently, Lansh will be sold, traded, loaned, borrowed and generally moved about within the fishing community. Generally, there are about 100 to 200 fishing craft based in the immediate Scat. area. Most of the lansh go out daily, with the Booms making longer trips of up to a week at a time.

The fishing community numbers up to 1,000, although this is hard to estimate; The folk themselves tend to move about between the fisher community both within Scat. and the numerous little fishing villages scattered along the estuary and coast. Some estimates put the numbers at only 500, with relatives and visitors from outlying villages making up the numbers. These kinfolk frequently visit Scat. for the benefits of urban life such as better prices, better ale, etc.

13 cogs are owned by Scat. residents, who are all merchants. 10 of these are used in regular trading trips to **Brennit** or **Bunberg**, and will usually welcome fare-paying passengers. Of these 10, some or all may be away at any time. The remaining 3 are for hire, and are frequently used by mercenaries and

merchants, adventurers or guilds, and the occasional private individual. 20-30 barges are working the River Scat. at any one time: one quarter of these are based at **Lords Landing**, and are generally in better repair than the others. These are owned by Enceinte residents, and get the pick of the contracts available to bargees.

MESSING ABOUT ON THE WATER:

Neither the mariners of Scat., nor the fishers like to sail out of sight of the shore, although their fears of the open sea can be overcome if the reward is great enough (part payment in advance, of course!).

Sail is the most efficient form of transport available to the average Scatophagian, and the town is

supplied with luxuries and durables chiefly by water.

Coastal boats include small dhows, galleys, longboats, givemes and barges. More suitable for sea travel are cogs, galleons and booms.

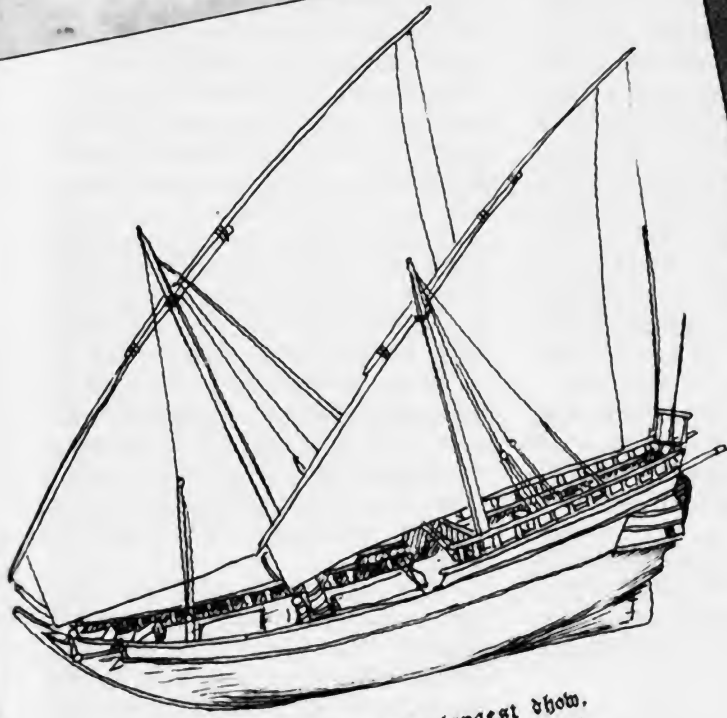
Stranger craft are sometimes seen from the western and northern lands of **Ephialtesa** and **Borol**.

Common beliefs held by Scat. folks is that Ephialtesa is a land of demons. The crew of these ships, however, appear fairly human.

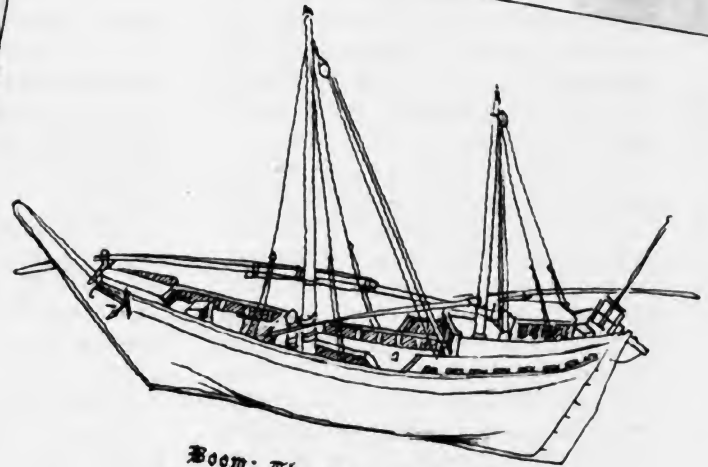
Ferrys cross Scatmouth daily from one fishing village to another. The **Chawth** ferry is also a daily affair, leaving the **Escatlr** coast about 2 or 3 hours before midday (depending on the sea conditions), arriving at Chawth at noon, and commencing its return trip an hour or so later.

Key To Map

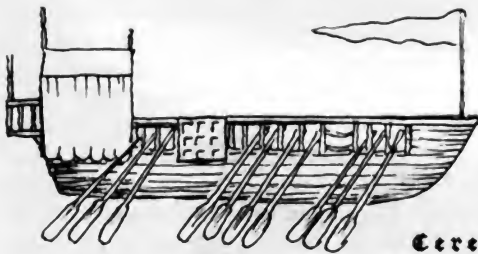
- 1-8: Quays for commercial vessels.
- 9: Holding & Impounding Quay with Customs Office.
- 10: Commercial Quay.
- 11: Dry Dock with Gates & Pumps.
- 12-15: Quays for Commercial Vessels.
- 16: Garrison Wharf where the Hulks are moored.
- 17: Wharf for Barges.
- 18: West Bridge.



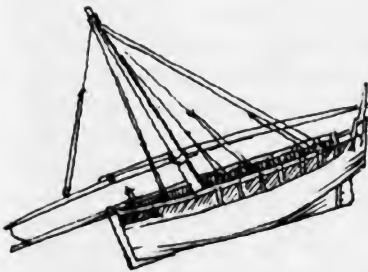
Baggala: The largest dhow, used for cargo and transport. These are over 100' long, and are mainly seen in the Gulf of Aqa, only occasionally docking in Scat.



Boom: The most seaworthy of the dhow-like craft, these are used mainly for the transport of cargo, but are versatile and swift. They require a minimum of 6 crew, and are up to 90' long.



Ceremonial Barge: Infrequently seen ferrying visiting dignitaries from the docks at the naval garrison to Lords Landing.



Launch: Small dhow used for fishing and light transport. 10-20', these are managable by a minimum crew of 2. This is the most numerous vessel in the Scat. area.

Longboat: The mast can be taken down and oars used to propel it, but this requires a very large crew. Otherwise, it can sail the craft. Has a steering oar on the right.



Single-masted Cog: These are used by merchants and military. Broad and sturdy ships, they ply the trade routes to Breennit and beyond. Requires a minimum crew of 10.



Hulks: Cathetus Vertex originally escaped Fulthess with 3 ships of Galleon style. These ships barely made it to anchor in Scatmouth, and the retainers, men-at-arms and crew removed to Scat. to establish the town.

The 3 vessels have been maintained through the centuries, and have been virtually replaced by repairs and such. Two of these grand vessels are harboured at the naval garrison: the **Stertorous** and the **Tolerable**. The Tolerable is the only seaworthy one at present, as the Stertorous has fallen into disrepair through cannibalism to keep the other one afloat.

The third ship, the **Prepossessing**, was taken by Arc, Vector's uncle in 17,666, when he was judged unfit to rule by **Tangent** (Vector's Grandfather). Arc was the rightful heir, being Tangent's eldest son. However, he had led an irresponsible and wastrel life, interspersed with dark rites and a lot of bloodshed, and no heir was likely to survive him; hence, when **Volute**, (Tangent's 2nd. son) fathered the baby Vector, Arc was summarily disowned.

Arc had good relations with a number of marines, and took 30 of these with him on the **Prepossessing**, to sail who-knows-where. The return of the rightful ruler has been looked for ever since, although by now he would be nearly 80 years old. Needless to say, supporters of the absent Arc are deemed traitors and receive harsh justice.

With its strong naval tradition, Scatophagium retains "hanging from the yardarm" as the capital punishment; either of the two hulks **Stertorous** or **Tolerable** are used, sometimes both on a good day! The advantages to this is that the victims may be seen by a good proportion of the town, and even if the rope fails, death by drowning will suffice.

SCENARIO HOOKS:

Further mishaps or encounters are likely to befall our adventurers as they wend their way to Scat.'s riverside or docks, especially if they wander off the beaten track somewhat. These may be used in the same game session as "Out & About" last issue, if preferred, or may be saved for a rainy day.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...

An interesting peddler sometimes encountered on the roads is the **Mirror Man**. From a distance, his figure will be perceived as a slowly

moving series of random flashes, which might be mistaken for the casting of magical spells by wary adventurers. As he approaches, it will be clear that the figure is a man draped about with 20 or 30 mirrors of varying sizes from 1" to 1' square. These mirrors will be of exceptional quality and are reflective on both sides, with no border or frame. The mirror man will sell these at a reasonable price, or even ransom himself with them from unscrupulous types. These mirrors will turn to water after twelve hours or so, and a character may regret having pocketed one or having packed it with perishables or other gear (especially with the likes of maps and scrolls.. he, he, he!)

The Mirror-Man is a one-spell natural magician whose single capability is the coaxing of springwater into a dense but temporary solid form that isn't ice.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS:

Let me introduce you to the **Valetudinarians of Chusp**, a pilgrim sect from Brennit who, on foot, are making their way to the **Gulf of Apa** and **Great Eathe**, where they will worship at the shrine of Chusp. These invalid petitioners chant the leagues away as they plod onward, and will be heard long before they are seen. Their number was originally over 50, but this has been progressively reduced by attack, accident and illness. The latter cause has accounted for the biggest drop-off, as all of them suffer from some sickness or other. Led by **Varicose**, an aged female Priestess, the 26 remaining disabled pilgrims appear to be moaning in unison as they shuffle along, supporting their own comrades. All wear wide-brimmed hats with heavy earflaps "*that we may not be discouraged by Chusp's envious rivals trying to lure us from the ordained path*". They believe that the cure for all their ills will be found at the shrine.

ON THE ROAD:

The surrounding fields of Scat. are divided by hedgerows of Elder, and the berries are being harvested for Elderberry wine. Some orchards of pear and apple trees are planted in sheltered spots. Farm houses and Manors are set back away from the road and are approached by dirt tracks. Traffic to or from the farms consist mainly of wagonloads of produce on its way to/from Scat. Occasionally, a farmer will be encountered on his way to Scat. on business, perhaps with his family, and

will be generally suspicious of adventurer types, particularly if he has just left his home in the care of a few farm labourers, or is returning with the profits from a deal struck in town. Any merchant caravans encountered will usually have an armoured escort, though the occasional lone wagon may be encountered.

Leading south from Scat. is the **Quarry Road**, whereon wagons travelling between the town and the quarries will be met. On the **Coast roads**, wagons belonging to the fisher people will be numerous during the day, as the catch is transported to town for sale, or in the evening returning home. These fishing folk tend to be a superstitious lot, with old customs and habits. They are usually Manudian.

The **East Road** is chiefly used by gangs travelling to or from the timber villages located north of the river. Easiest access is gained by fording the Scat. at **Pig Rock**, 30 miles east of town, from where the timber encampments are about 10 miles north. This road also supplies the **Tower of Lances**, which is situated 45 miles east of the town, at the confluence of the **Horsehemmer** and **Scat.** rivers. This is the town's fortified outpost, occupied by up to 20 mounted troops and cavalry. A rider returns to Scat. every day, passing his replacement on the road. If no rider reaches Scat., then the position is presumed unhealthy at Lances, and a force will be despatched to investigate. On several occasions, the town has been warned of the approach of invading forces by an exhausted rider and mount collapsing with a gasped message at the first guardpost on the road into town.

The East Road is also used by horse traders and ranchers to herd horses to Scat. for the **Horse Fairs**.

When travelling on any road in Scat., it is possible that the party may encounter a patrol of 10 to 20 mounted soldiers, captained by an Officer and N.C.O. of the city guard, or the same number of mercenary troops employed to ride the highways in search of brigands and such. These soldiers are paid a bounty on the thieves and highwaymen they catch, and sometimes they may become over-zealous, suspecting any travellers they encounter as highwaymen; possession of large sums of cash is evidence enough to brand a suspect guilty.

ADVENTURES IN THE DOCKSIDE:

There are plenty of opportunities for adventure and skullduggery at the



docks. The main vices, of course, are smuggling and illegal trade, hijacking and petty theft from the docks is rife; many officials and guards have been corrupted through bribes and payoffs, and the dock workers themselves will usually turn a blind eye if they can line their pockets with money or goods.

The adventurers can be recruited by the docks company to help assess the major problems and weed out key offenders; this will be tough, as the men stick together and scorn outsiders.

Alternatively, the party can land a job at the docks and get embroiled in the web of petty theft and dishonesty, possibly making all the right contacts to pull off a large job, such as smuggling tax free liqueurs or crops from neighbouring islands.

Those with religious duties to fulfil might like to be 'thrown in at the deep end' and seek to convert members of this community to a less materialistic way of life...

Perhaps the most difficult job of all for a party of unsuspecting adventurers could be their recruitment to police the area. Officials are not well-liked in these parts, and those that are tolerated are heavily bribed or blackmailed. Should the party react unfavourably to such attempts, it's quite likely that they will experience a night-time encounter with a mob of dock-workers (suitably armed with clubs and axe-handles), possibly backed by magical support if the stakes are high enough; for example, one of the local powerful merchants is expecting a large consignment of illicit substance from Chawth, and doesn't want the party to cause delays...

Of course, they may also be recruited to **help** the above merchant protect his consignment from interference by the dock officials.

BOAT BOOTY:

It's quite likely that the party will like to hire a boat. This can be for many reasons; boating is as pleasant a way to see Scat. itself as any other, and will allow the party to venture inland to scout the area, or to explore Scatmouth and beyond. It is a much slower pace than travelling by road, but if sailing themselves, it can be quite hard work.

It's unadvisable for the party to try to steal a boat. For one thing, each craft is numbered clearly to allow instant recognition; the boat is registered in the owner's name and the river is policed diligently by fishers and the like, who are very keen at spotting strangers, and dole out justice as they see fit. This is especially so with the larger boats, as it's virtually impossible

to keep track of the smaller Lansh.

Several adventuring opportunities can arise on the water, from searching for sunken treasure to transporting cargo for a merchant. If the adventurers have a significant reputation, they may be asked to guard a cargo of treasure for either a visiting dignitary, aboard one of the ceremonial barges, or a wealthy merchant's vessel, back from a successful sojourn to exotic lands... the possibilities are endless.

STORAGE FOR HIRE:

Occasionally, a warehouse becomes vacant due to bankruptcy or seasonal variation in the demand to store imports such as crops. This gives the players the opportunity to bid for storage space, should they wish. If not, they may be recruited by a local merchant to guard his newly acquired warehouse.

The warehouse itself is 150' square and is almost empty. As the players enter, they'll notice the state of disrepair immediately. It looks as though this place has been abandoned for some time.

Over in one corner is a stack of empty softwood crates and boxes, partially covered by sailcloth and tarpaulins.

Removing these will cause a scurry of rats to flee from all angles; these are large rats (up to 18" long) and have sharp, disease-infected teeth. The players should obviously avoid being bitten.

It appears as though the boxes are empty.

Bedding down for the night, the players will be annoyed by the constant scraping and scratching caused by the rats- one or two PCs may be molested in the night by a rat leaping at the bundle of sleeping bodies. The wind rushes through two broken windows in the rafters, through one of which the light of the full moon beams a shaft of light right at one of the PC's faces. During the course of the night, the other resident of the warehouse will enter through this window; a vampire bat. It may take the opportunity to land on one of the party and feed for a little while; this will pass on the irritating infection known as "**the Bat's Curse**", which causes its victim to constantly bite and chew at things. The poor victim suffers a horrid lust to feel a chewy substance between his teeth; usually this must be leathery (raw meat or bare flesh will suffice). The only (non-magical) cure for this is to ingest copious quantities of iron-rich foods such as raw liver, or to drink plenty of blood, animal or otherwise.

If the party **do** awake during the night, which is quite likely, a shaft of moonlight falls onto a hidden panel in the wall. Behind this is a sealed, heavy 6'x6' box which emanates a pungent, dour smell. It is sealed with 1/2" thick wooden nails and marked "Private belongings- to stay".

Inside this is a good deal of smelly, fungus-covered clothes. Further rummaging will uncover the badly decomposed body of a headless youth. It is naked, and unidentifiable. If the box is emptied and the clothing thoroughly searched, a locket will be found. Inscribed on the back of this is a message "**With love, Artenua**".

In the morning, there will be no trace of the body, the box or the secret panel. Just the locket remains, and tracing its owner or giver will be impossible; this is just a red herring to keep the GM amused, but if you like, an elaborate political plot can be uncovered.

A FISHER'S TALE!

There's plenty of tales told by the fisher-folk of Scat. Many are just old tales, pure fabrications or gross distortions of old legends and happenings. However, some are to be believed... The following is one such tale, told by an old man who is too old to remember what he was told yesterday, but able to remember clearly the events of eighty years ago:

"Aye, it's bin a long, long time since a' wen' daun te the see"

(GM: A modern translation of his tale follows!)

"Yep, it's been some time since I went to sea. Those were the days when the great Captain Haigh was in charge of his great fleet. Three times I sailed with him, and three times we come near disaster and met with terrible storms. Three times I feared for my life and prayed to the great god Manud to judge me fairly and let me escape with my life."

"Captain Haigh? No, he wasn't a religious man. No, many's the time I heard him cry out terrible blasphemies against the gods of the sea, blaming them as if they had a terrible cause for halting his progress. And maybe they did, maybe they did..."

"The first time we sailed, I was merely a boy, hand-servant to the Captain and anyone else who would use me. Them were hard days for everyone, especially at sea. And none were harder than the life of a cabin boy. Ah, but I trusted Manud, god of order and justice to be fair with me, I knew that was my lot and was



happy to do my job. Besides, the smell of the sea and the romance and excitement was in my blood. You see, I come from a long line of fishers and sailors...

(GM: The old man is likely to waffle on about irrelevancies and personal miseries, etc. if the players allow him to. Wind them up, frustrate and infuriate them to the point where they don't want to listen any more. The reward of the fisher's tale is only for those who are patient. If they prod him, though, he will continue with his main tale;)

"It was when I was cleaning the Skipper's cabin that I first noticed his collection of books; no, I couldn't read, but I could see the pictures. Them books was all about the stars and the tides and the seas, and of foreign lands to the south. I used to study them pictures most days when the skipper weren't about. Oh, I used to love them books and wished I could read 'em, but that weren't meant for me, by **Manud**, no it weren't!

"Nothin' much happened that trip exceptin' we were boarded by a pirate crew who stole all our goods and tossed us o'board. Lucky I could swim well, cuz manys a man that lost 'is life with the tides carryin' him south. Anyways, **Manud** preserved me an the Captain both, and many other good men, and it weren't long afore we were sent to sea again. This time, the Captain had hired three other boats to accompany him. Again, I was to be his cabin boy. By this time, I'd started havin' some lessons in readin' and I figured I might like to learn somethin' off the Captain's books. But he always kept 'em locked up nowdays, y'see. Anyways, the skipper started stayin' awake late on this journey, and one mornin' I came in and he was fas' asleep on 'is bed, with his book lyin' next to him. I picked it up to put it away, and was lookin' at one of the pictures. I still couldn't read well enough, though, but the picture was like a **giant octopus** with evil-lookin' eyes and its arms reachin' out across the sea and the land. That was a scary picture, allright, but what scared me more was when the skipper woke up. He didn't half shout at me for lookin' at that book. He asked if I'd read any of it, and when I told 'im I couldn't read, he quietened down a bit and told me to get on with me work... I didn't argue, I can tell ya.

"Anyways, we were headin' south like before, and we'd just got to the **funnel** at **Gor Vith**, where the sea

narrows, when the boat started rollin' and rockin' about. It got so bad that I thought we'd keel over. The spray off the water was washin' ashore and it was certain to sink us. Everybody had gotten below deck, figurin' that was the best way of ridin' it out, and let the ship go where she wanted, which seemed to be back in the direction we came. The skipper, though, he lashed 'imself to the wheel and he fought with all his strength to keep us goin' on through the **funnel**. I was lookin' out through the porthole of his cabin, but I couldn't see much, because of the sea spray hittin' the glass. What I did see made me dive for cover, though, as I saw the giant shape of a massive being; a **mer-man**, with his great tail, was splashin' the sea against us, driving us back: two of the other ships were sunk, and the other driven back, but the skipper just kept on going, tryin' to get through and past this giant monster...

"After a while, it all went quiet. I rushed up to the deck to see if we were still afloat, and the water all around was calm. There was no sign of the skipper or the monster that was blockin' our way, but we'd gotten through. We'd got past the **funnel**.

"We docked at **Lesser Eathe**, and had to ground the ship to do it. We all thought the skipper was gone, and after tellin' our story, although I never said what I saw through that window, we got safe passage back to **Scat**.

"A couple of years later, while I was workin' a smaller fishin' boat, I saw a familiar shape: it was that of **Captain Haigh**; he was gettin' another crew together for a journey south. This time, he wanted a whole fleet of 12 ships, and he meant it. I don't know where he got his funds, but he never seemed to be lacking for whatever he wanted, and he never semed to work for anybody but hisself.

"As I said, I was a bit older now, and I wasn't scared of the Captain no more. I was still curious though, and I'd been learnin' a bit more readin' and wanted to know what it said in his books, so I gladly signed up, this time as the Captain's steward.

"He was a great skipper all right; he was hard on his crew, but fair. He paid well and never let the men go without food or water. He knew how to get the best out of folk. This time, we had sailed to that point where we were nearly lost before, at the **funnel**. It was then that I saw a giant carving in

the rocks, the shape of a man with a fishes tail. I laughed to myself as I remembered how it had frightened me. We got through okay this time, there was no sign of the storm which wracked us last time, although the skipper at this point was stood on the after-castle with one of his books in his hands, looking skyward as if looking for a sign, or as if praying to **Manud** for guidance.

"That night, I lay on the deck before going to bed, and I was lookin' at the stars. There was somethin' odd, somethin' familiar about it, as if I'd been there before, thinkin' me same thoughts and sayin' the same things. I must have been tired, I thought, so I went to bed.

"It was two days later before we got into the open waters beyond the **Gulf of Apa**, beyond **Great Eathe**. I'd never been that far south before, and I was excited. Anyways, we came across another disaster as we struck a large, uncharted island. There was no sign of the skipper anywhere, and the ship was going down fast. I rushed to the skipper's cabin and it was empty, save for a book which was open on his bed. The picture was of a giant sea-snake, its mouth was open and a huge hulk of a ship was sailing into it. I began reading, frightened though I was, and I saw clearly the words "**treasure**" and "**countless riches**". The ship surged suddenly and, without thinking, I stashed the book under my jacket and rushed out to dive overboard. I don't know what happened next, cuz it was all black and smokey and I couldn't see anything. I must have blacked out, but I woke on a small island in the middle of the sea, with no-one else about. I nearly starved on that island. It was three days before I was rescued by a passing pirate crew from **Gor Vith**. They mistook me for a mad man and left me alone, dropping me off at the **Great Eathe**, from where I cadged my passage aboard a fishin' trawler bound for **Scat**. I ain't never bin to the sea since! And I ain't never opened that book again, either. I just sit and thank **Manud** that he saved me that day."

If persuaded with sufficient gusto, and if convinced that the party have been sent by **Manud** to do justice to the sea-monsters in the book, he might relinquish the book (gratefully) to the party for safe-keeping.

The GM now has many sea-adventures, monsters and tales to-be discovered within this book.

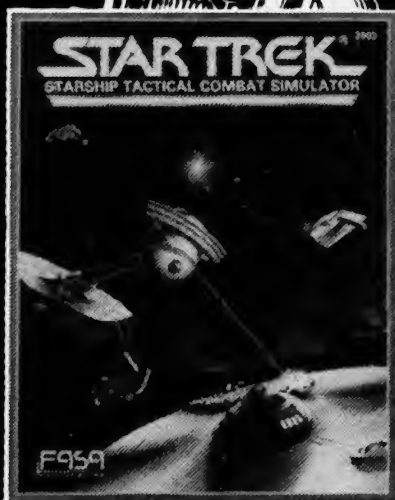
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Elfquest SHOP WINDOW

The Elfquest Boardgame

BY MAYFAIR GAMES (£12.95)



If you have already discovered **Elfquest**, you will either love it as a charming adventure, or hate it for being excruciatingly cute. But whatever your prejudices, forget them: the **Elfquest** boardgame is a cracker and will find fans among those who like and those who hate the comic.

Mayfair hasn't ignored the story in this adaption, which surprisingly captures the spirit of the story very well. The elves' objective is **Elf Home**, the place of their birth, and before they can find it, they must cope with the events and obstacles of the event cards. These also include personalities like **Cutter**, **Skywise** and **Winnowill**, all of whom can help or hinder different players.

But the most flexibly used enemy of the elves is **King Guttlekraw's** trolls. This is simply because one of the players gets to control the trolls and stomp elf.

Elfquest can be played by two to five players and is keenly balanced across this range. Each of the four elf tribes is represented by one pawn on the board and a pile of strength counters off the board. The troll player gets one troll counter for **King Guttlekraw** and one troll counter for each elf tribe in the game; troll strength is concealed from the elves. This ensures that the trolls always have the advantage: there are enough troll counters to keep each elf tribe covered, and the concealed strength makes elvish attacks against the trolls very risky.

Like **Black Morn Manor**, **Worlds of Boris Vallejo**, and **Kings and Things**, **Elfquest** uses a multi-tile board. Tiles are laid as part of each player's turn, and tile play is enlivened by the troll interrupting each elf's turn to play one tile of his own. Worst still - and very infuriating for elf players - the troll can choose to play a tile from any player's hand. This interruption gives the troll player a respectable say in the lay of the land, and using other players' tiles allows the troll to keep the special **Elf Home** tiles out of play.

Of the five **Elf Home** tiles which the troll player controls at the start of the game, only one is the real location of **Elf Home**. This is chosen by the troll at the start of the game and its respective clue counter kept on one side. The other four clue counters, which say where **Elf Home** is not, are placed on the board whenever a clue tile is laid. By visiting each clue tile the elves can deduce the true location of **Elf Home**. It's like **Cluedo** without the messy sheets of paper.

Movement over the board is simple. Each tile is diagonally divided into four terrain sections; each section has a numbered value which affects tile play and is also the cost to enter that section in movement allowance for each turn, and although the elves are faster, the Trolls have the advantage of being able to use Troll tunnels without penalty. Troll tunnels are marvellous secret passages which enable the trolls to move quickly over the board; elves have to stop on entering them.

While the elves hunt for clues the troll has to keep them away from clue tiles, troll tunnels and **Elf Home** tiles. The easiest way to do this is beat the elves up, which brings other rewards other than satisfaction. When the troll wins or loses combat, troll morale goes up or down respectively. Morale keeps the worker trolls going and can be spent to build a metal dome over **Elf Home**. The dome cuts **Elf Home** off from the elves and the troll player wins if he completes the dome before the elves find out its true location. Since the troll gains morale at the end of each player's turn this makes the game ending fairly definite - it also makes the game suitable for an evening's play.

The game turns very much into a race: the elves must compete against each other to be first to find **elf home**, and all elves must help each other to defeat the troll. Likewise, the troll must continue bashing elves to stay on top.

No one player has a crushing advantage over the others, so gamers who enjoy balanced games should take to **Elfquest**. Gamers who are fans of the comic will also enjoy the game for its portrayal of the quest. And **Elfquest** haters may well simply enjoy the game because it allows them to smash cute elves to bits.

Mayfair may have a winner on its hands.
I. Marsh



Ellery Queen's Mystery Game

BY MAYFAIR GAMES (£12.95)



A board-game for 1-6 players, this game is very much akin to **Consulting Detective**, as moving from one clue location to another, sharing clues with each other, the players attempt to solve the mystery and expose the culprit.

There are six detectives to play; *Ellery Queen himself, Marshall Porlock, Gene Lowery, Ken Burke, Chloris Turner and Lila Adams*, for whom character cards are provided which indicate your detective's background, appearance, contact names and areas of expertise.

Next, turning to the **casebook**, this is a 32-page booklet containing 5 case background/introductions, 189 clues (only) and the clue solutions (which, incidentally, are reversed text and need to be read in a mirror!). The players choose which case to solve, but the big drawback is that there's only a choice of five. Case introductions range from 1/2 page to 1 1/2 pages of text to read. Those familiar with **Consulting Detective** or **221B Baker Street** will know the sort of thing- the phone rings, the detective gets the story, clues and red herrings, all of which must be remembered at the start, as there's no way of telling the good from the bad at this point.

The playing board is the by-now familiar jig-cut type; six pieces which slot together. On one side is a large-scale

map of **New York City**, with appropriate clue locations indicated. On the reverse side is the **Bromlee Station** street map, with house numbers and appropriate street names. This is the nicer side of the board to use, but unfortunately is only needed in one case.

Players take it in turn to 'have a go' at moving his detective piece and reading a clue (if one exists). An important step is to move the **Turn Record Indicator**, which basically keeps track of time. This is important, as some of the clues may be given out only if a certain amount of time has passed, whilst others may be missed if the players don't get to the scene of the crime on time. The weather plays an important part in this sequence as well, as a storm can sometimes wash away clues, or even clue locations (!) if you're not careful. I thought this addition really gave a sense of 'thrill' to the otherwise routine action of zapping around the board, indiscriminately, which was one of the major faults with **Consulting Detective**. Another innovation is that, whilst on the **New York City** map, you may elect to move two areas, but gain no access to clues, or move to an adjacent area and look up one clue, or remain in the same area and look up two clues.

All clues are read aloud for the benefit of all players:- An example of a (very brief) clue, would be "No-one at the *Tobacconist's* has ever seen that particular pipe before".

It's really a co-operative game, with all players working together, but the element of competition is added as a player decides he or she has solved the mystery. This is stated aloud, and the player reads the solution. If correct in every detail, that player has won. If not, he just drops out of the game, usually having given one or more vital hints to the other players.

More detailed clues are assigned if a detective has a known contact or expertise in an area stated at a clue location. Obviously, if a P.I. is "well in" with the *Tobacconist*, he may have gotten more out of him.

The **advanced rules book** expands the competitive element by having clues read silently, and the detective now has

the ability to 'squench' up to three clue locations, which are then only accessible to a player with the appropriate area of expertise, or a known contact in that location.

This book also sets out a very clear format for writing your own mysteries. This is invaluable, as each case can only be played once, unless sufficient months have passed, causing you to forget that case entirely. Writing cases is a long and complicated procedure, but the rules do help a great deal, and anyone with experience of running games sessions should do quite well at it.

To add a sense of realism and authenticity, as well as to increase the number of freely available clues via background material, Mayfair have included the **Detectives' Guide To New York**, which includes a background to the different neighbourhoods and their respective clue locations, and a list of where to go to use your expertise skills.

Similarly, the **Guide to Bromlee Station** can be read freely by players during the game (preferably when somebody else is taking their turn), and gives background to the town of Bromlee, important local businesses and services (clue locations), a history of **Bromlee Mansion** and **John Hancock College**, essential to the serious detective.

I enjoy this type of game, as they're imaginative and require deduction and reasoning. 5 cases only is a bit limiting, but I suppose that's more than you get with your average RPG, so I guess I'll have to "get to it" and start designing some! **Ste Dillon**.

Quickies

HEROES Vol. II(2). by **Avalon-Hill** for their fantasy games. This issue has lots for **Powers** and **Perils**, including the adventure, **Sea Of Tears**, and articles on **Shadow Magic** and **The Priesthood**. Also features the advanced **Character Sheet** for **RuneQuest III**, and **Sorcery**. Also covers **Lords of Creation** and **Freedom In The Galaxy**.



HOBBIT HATERS:

Readers in the provinces will have missed the **London Daily News'** column of 5th March which launched a pithy attack against Tolkien's **Lord of The Rings**, and his reputation as a writer.

The Crier's eye was first taken by the huge quotation "*Anyone who hates hobbits can't be all bad*". But more interesting was the description of the **Lord of The Rings** as "*wistfully sentimental, containing little wit and much whimsy*". Quite right too. But if the press thinks that of one of the roleplaying hobby's major influences, The Crier can only wonder what it will eventually make of the hobby itself...

BOND IS BACK (AGAIN):

Each time a new Bond product is released, supposedly humorous reviewers and news columnists alike get a strange urge to kick their verbiage off with "*My name is Bond, James Bond*". Fortunately, The Crier is above such juvenilia, and is content to mention that the latest **James Bond 007** adventure package imported by **TM Games** is **On Her Majesty's Secret Service**. OHMSS contains 4 welcome solitaire adventures for bondage lovers.

Trite innuendo The Crier is not above...

HOOD IN THE WOOD:

ICE will shortly be releasing a sourcebook for **Robin Hood** adventures. It will take the form of a typical **ICE** campaign pack with background information as well as adventures, and will be a useful aid to referees running or planning to run a *Robin of Sherwood* style campaign. Marketed for use with **Rolemaster**, **MERP** or **HERO** games systems, the campaign book has a big advantage over other American sourcepacks as it has been written by an English writer. **Graham Staplehurst**, well known for his florid articles on the Middle-Earth rolegame, has compiled all the essential information for a successful campaign.

Graham is no stranger to the background of Robin Hood. **Puffin** will be releasing his first Robin of Sherwood game book, **The King's Demon**, in May. A second book written by Paul Mason, **The Sword of the Templar**, will follow in June. First proofs of these two books look quite remarkable, with a far higher degree of plotting and atmosphere than the **Fighting Fantasy** range. There is more than one way to complete each adventure, and there is considerable replay value in trying to get a different, more successful outcome.

The Robin of Sherwood game books feature **Sean Connery** as Robin on the cover. Despite this, even serious gamers should find them interesting to look at.



THE PRICE OF FREEDOM:

Marc Gascoign's vitriolic pen has cost him his position as commissioning editor at Games Workshop's Design Studio. His expulsion follows remarks made in the letters page of **White Dwarf** 87 about West End Games' **The Price Of Freedom**:

"You'd have to be very, very stupid to spend your money actually buying The Price of Freedom", frothed Marc, *"If people really want to buy the game that's their look-out."*

The move is purely a political one on the part of Games Workshop. They are reportedly negotiating with West End to produce the American company's **Star Wars** licensed rolegame in the UK, and the attack on one of their products was untimely. Getting rid of Marc seems to have been the most expedient way of smoothing relations.

Staff at the Design Studio may well miss the vituperative tongue of Marc. Life without him will be 'quiet' says current editor **Mike Brunton**. Others might say 'bearable'.

Marc's future is uncertain. He may well drift back to Games Workshop at an appropriate moment. The Nottingham company has a reputation for getting rid of people and then welcoming them back. If he stays away, GW will certainly have lost one of their most quality-conscious staff, to the detriment of the games hobby.

GAMES FAIR FULL:

Anyone hoping for last minute tickets to **Games Fair** can forget it; all the places went by January this year. No special guests are planned. This is probably because **TSR (US)** no longer has any big names to send over that the UK hobby will be familiar with. Still, there are special events, and The Crier will just mention the quiz which will allow certain hobbyists to make fools of themselves, this correspondent included.

Back to products and **MA3, the Ultimate Powers Book**. This is a collection of almost 300 superpowers taken from comic books; not necessarily **Marvel** ones! As well as being an invaluable play-aid to referees of the **Marvel** game, the **Ultimate Powers Book** should prove extremely useful to all other superhero games referees. The **Powers** book doesn't bear too much relevance to the game itself, although it will fit in. There is also an advanced character generation system-- more advanced than the **Advanced Set**-- which incorporates rationales, rather like the **Golden Heroes** character generation system. Despite being more advanced, it is still easy to use.

Improving established products seems to be **TSR's** aim this month. For **AD&D** there is the **Dragonlance Companion**. This is a sourcebook for the world of **Krynn**, and includes much of the information the earlier **Dragonlance** sourcebook should have contained. It is also more oriented towards the book rather than the game.

The **Companion** includes songs, recipes, games and scholarly essays on races and philosophy. The essays on races expand details given in the modules, giving the referee much more to work with for a better campaign.

I11, Needle takes characters of levels 6-10 through a **Frank Mentzer** designed jungle to retrieve a magical obelisk. The literature goes on: "But the adventure doesn't end there (pity). Now they must go through the portal that has opened in the obelisk, and then find themselves on a strange planet!" Adventurers of this level, of course, are well accustomed to a tame life of inter-dimensional travel.

The first in the gazetteer series **GAZ1 The Grand Duchy of Karamelkos** should arrive in the next few months. **TSR** continues to improve available background material for the **D&D** game. The gazetteers will detail particular areas of the world in an official **D&D** campaign setting. Descriptions of cities, governments, people and customs, a sprinkling of short, ready to play adventures and a full-colour area map should endear these products to those referees who don't create their own backgrounds. The series may even help character development in the form of power politics roleplaying.

KNOCK KNOCK:

Who's there? **The Realm**? Another live action role playing club? This time it's in **Burnley**. The Realm have informed me that young persons under the age of 16 can't apply for membership, but otherwise you may qualify by writing to **Hammy** or **Pete** at 18 Woodhead Road, READ, Nr. Burnley, Lancs. Basic starter dungeons are available for £20, which includes the annual membership fee. Further adventures then cost £6 each. Non-members pay £7.50 per visit.

FANTASTIC CHRONICLES:

Contributors to the Irish gaming magazine **Fantasy Chronicles** are contemplating taking legal action to recover money owed to them. This is the first such direct action taken against a role-playing magazine, and it highlights the difficulties F.C. are having with their distributor:-

"The distributor has reduced its estimate substantially", said editor Ian Brown, "and hasn't paid us for a couple of months".

Fantasy Chronicles may fold if enough pressure is brought to bear, but an amicable solution would still be best for the hobby.

ANYONE FOR TERONUS?

There are oodles of new figures due from **Grenadier** next month. Of special note is a series of figures designed by **Julie Guthrie**, one of **Ral Partha's** ex-designers. The 12 figures retain the delightful style of **Ral Partha** figures, and being cast in the UK direct means supplies should be good. The figures are basic adventurer types for **D&D** and will include a paladin, anti-paladin, evil mage, half-elf fighter mage, ranger with bow, swordsman, armoured barbarian, dwarf fighter, fighting bard, thief with sword, white mage with pointy hat and a female cleric! And for once, all the women have clothes on!

The **Dragon Lords** are reinforced by a cute elven dragon, a storm dragon and a guardian dragon. The big one to look out for, however, is **Teronus**, the **Ultimate Dragon**. Weighing in at 1kg. she should be a fearsome addition to any figure collection. Anyone for Teronus? Undoubtedly.

Nick Lund is developing **Grenadier UK's** home-designed range of dwarfs with **FW7**, giant dwarf crossbow and crew. This piece should prove popular with tabletop gamers, since it increases the amount of miniatures artillery available to budding generals. Diorama designers may also make something of the two crew, one of whom is struggling with the bow and the other with a bucket of bolts. More orcs from **Nick** are expected too, this time armed with bows.

Grenadier UK plan to release more of the **Fantasy Lords** boxed sets, although only a selection of the **US** sets will be forthcoming. Blister packs for the same range will be out soon, including a butch, fearsome armoured **Balrog**; not your average wimpy **Balrog** that other figure manufacturers have produced in the past. Also in the range are a cyclops, rangers, sea elves, oriental goblins and undead dragon men.

BY IAN MARSH

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LIVE BY THE SWORD

READERS' LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please address all letters to: **LIVE BY THE SWORD, ADVENTURER, 85 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG.**

What better way to end your first year of publishing than to have a readers' poll. If the letters I receive by the score are anything to go by, I'm sure we'll be flooded with responses, but after all, what better way of letting us know exactly what you want to see in *your* magazine?

ADAM SMITH, Beaconsfield: The coverage of fanzines is excellent. Ben and Alex provide an amusing, informative review every time. Keep it up! But as you know, no magazine is perfect, and that includes *Adventurer*. In my view, it would be better if you didn't concentrate on one main topic every issue. In particular, issue #7 concentrated on religion—hardly a topic desperate for more discussion. A magazine should provide a varied read covering many topics. Concentrating on one aspect isn't a good idea as you become too restricted.

ROBERT WOOD, Cheshire: So far there has been no adequate articles on clerics' beliefs and gods in fantasy gaming. I myself play a cleric character in D&D and I find I cannot play my character properly as I don't know which god my character worships, only that he prays to a lawful god. Your front cover (ADV #7) seems to portray the three gods of alignment; the god of law, the god of neutrality and the god of chaos. Can we expect such an article?

A typical downfall in beginning GMs, Robert, is to ignore such fine subtleties as developing a religious faith, social and

historical background or even campaign environment, and that's where magazines like *Adventurer* come in—we offer ideas for GMs to build on. If you're looking for examples of gods in a fantasy game, get your GM to run the "Church of the White Zone" by Robin Parry in *Adventurer* #7.

JANET and PETER VIALLS, Huntingdon: Church of The White Zone was quite good, but we trust *Scatophagium* isn't going to take over *Adventurer*: campaign worlds are an interesting idea, but don't let them take over to the exclusion of all else. If material is TOO tightly tied to *Scatophagium*, it becomes difficult to adapt to the GM's own fantasy world. I have been working on my campaign world for five years; I like Robin Parry's *Scatophagium*, but not enough to want to abandon our own *Mhorann*. On the other hand, by providing a coherent background, the translation of scenarios and ideas is facilitated—rather than basing a scenario on some ill-defined evil god, if it is based on Schub then I know what Schub is and his parallel in my world. Conclusion; produce material for *Scatophagium* by all means, but don't publish material that can only be set in or around *Scatophagium*.

Scat. is intended to provide a generic fantasy campaign world, which can be used straight from the pages of *Adventurer* for any FRP system. Further, those GMs (like yourself) who wish to use sections of the scenario, poach ideas or cannibalise the series can do so with ease.

AIDAN HARVEY, Leeds: I think the *Scatophagium* campaign is great! I took my players on your "Out & About" guided tour (ADV #8), which went down really well. The only thing is, one of the players seemed to know a bit too much about the area. So, assuming he didn't have direct contact with Incantor Whek, I figured he must have read the scenario in *Adventurer*. To fool him, I replaced the bit about the old quarry with my own idea; keeping with the insect-ie theme, I had the quarry and all the valley it was in turned to mud, and occupied by gigantic worms! This totally fooled my player who was expecting an easy time of it. Needless to say, he had to make a hasty retreat to rejoin the guide and his party of NPCs! Great stuff!

You see, Robin, I told you it would work! Are there any gigantic worms on *Scat*? You never heard of any? Oh well, we just found some!

PAUL WETHERBY, Ramsgate: "Heresy" was an excellent article, a fine example of what *Adventurer* should print. With such a large subject area, though, it was of necessity an overview, but it was knowledgeable and broad-minded, and best of all contained an awful lot to think about. Lots of questions and pointers for a lively mind to bounce off of. Religion can enhance any campaign, the best example of its use in a rpg is in *Runequest: Cults of Prax and Cults of Terror* are useful sourcebooks for any gamer.

DAVE MORRIS, London: P. Elliot's article (ADV #7) was excellent: undoubtedly the best thing you've published to date. This is exactly the kind of material I was talking about (LBTS #5) a few

1987 READER POLL:

This is the first full-scale poll that we have undertaken. It is an attempt at getting to know exactly what the readers of **Adventurer** want to see in **Adventurer**, and for that reason, I would like as many of you as possible to complete this form and return it to us by the 1st. May 1987. Any forms received after that date will not be included in the analysis, so get cracking!

1. THE READER

This section is for information about you: who you are and where you live, etc. You don't have to fill in all the details if you don't want to; but this would lead to an incomplete analysis.

Name: _____ Age: _____
Sex (M/F): _____ Address: _____

Occupation (if any): _____

How long have you been playing RPGs? _____

Other Hobbies: _____

2. ADVENTURER

This section is to find out what you like or don't like about **Adventurer**.

1. How often do you buy **Adventurer**?
(Always, sometimes or hardly ever)

2. How often do you read **Adventurer**?
(Always, sometimes or hardly ever)

3. Rearrange this list in order, so that your favourite regular **Adventurer** editorial feature is on the top, and the one you least like is on the bottom:-

- A. Live By The Sword.
- B. Town Crier.
- C. Fanzines Forever.
- D. Play-By-Mail.
- E. Voyages Beyond.
- F. Shop Window.
- G. Figures Front.
- H. Once Bitten.
- I. D3.
- J. Whiplash.
- K. Bomber.
- L. Adventurer Fiction.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____
- I. _____
- J. _____
- K. _____
- L. _____

4. Which is your favourite issue of **Adventurer** to date?
Issue # _____
5. Which is your least favourite issue of **Adventurer** to date?
Issue # _____
6. What is your favourite **cover** to date? Issue # _____
7. Would you like to see more **scenarios** or more **articles**, or do you think we have the right balance? _____
8. Which **scenario** have you enjoyed **most** ? _____
9. Which **scenario** have you liked **least** ? _____
10. Do you prefer scenarios to be 1) For 1 system only, or 2) for 2 systems, or 3) Systemless, without stats.? _____
11. Do you play or read the **Scatophagium** scenarios? _____
12. Which **article** have you enjoyed **most**? _____
13. Which **article** have you liked **least**? _____
14. Do you prefer **articles** which are tied to a **specific** system, or **generic** ones, of some use in many games?

15. Would you like to see columns, features or articles in **Adventurer** for the following topics:- Wargames? _____
(Answer Y or N) Computer Games? _____
Solo Adventures? _____
Fantasy/SF films? _____
Fantasy/SF books? _____
Live-action RPGs? _____
Fantasy model-making? _____
16. Which games would you like to see **more** of in **Adventurer**? _____
17. Which games would you like to see **less** of in **Adventurer**? _____
18. What do you like **most** about **Adventurer**? _____
19. What do you like **least** about **Adventurer**? _____
20. How many people (besides yourself) **usually** read your copy of **Adventurer**? _____
21. How many people (besides yourself) **usually** play in your group? _____
22. Do you find the **advertisements** in **Adventurer** useful, or are they a waste of space? _____

23. Have you ever **purchased** something as a result of an advertisement in **Adventurer**? _____

3. OTHER OPINIONS

This section is to complete the picture about our readers; what else you enjoy about the worlds of fantasy and SF.

1. What are your favourite 3 **magazines** (In order)?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Others you read: _____

2. Do you read **Fanzines**? (A lot, Sometimes, or never).

3. Which is your **favourite** 'zine? _____

4. What are your top 3 **RPGs**?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5. What are your top 3 **F/SF board games**?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. What are your top 3 game **supplements/modules**?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7. Who is your favourite game **manufacturers/ design** company? _____

8. Who is your favourite game **designer**? _____

9. Who is your favourite miniatures **manufacturer**? _____

10. Who is your favourite miniatures **designer**? _____

11. Who is your favourite miniatures **painter**? _____

12. Do you use miniatures for **gaming or collecting**? _____

13. Which is your favourite **paint** for miniatures? _____

14. Who is your favourite **F/SF artist**? _____

15. Who is your favourite **F/SF author**? _____

16. Who is your favourite **Adventurer** **illustrator**? _____

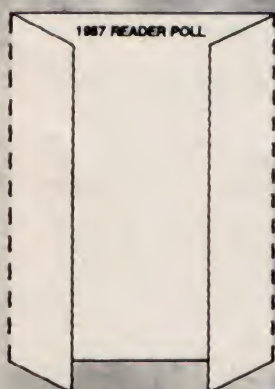
17. Who is your favourite **Adventurer** **contributor**? _____



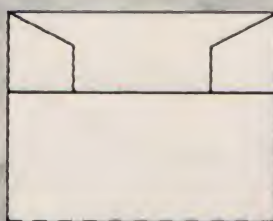
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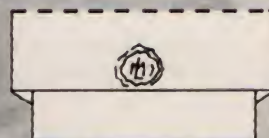
1. Pull centre pages out of mag.
2. Fold along dotted lines as shown in diagram below.
3. If necessary use sticky tape to seal.
4. Affix a postage stamp and send to Mersey Leisure Publishing.



1. Fold 2 side sections in.



2. Fold bottom section up.



3. Tuck top into bottom using
side sections to secure.

issues back. Can anybody still doubt that a little sprinkling of historical "truth" works wonders for a campaign?

GARY SHANNON, Liverpool: Any role-playing game is designed primarily for players' enjoyment, and so it doesn't matter whether a society is totally realistic. The game isn't meant to be realistic, and people like P. Elliot (The Heroic Age, ADV #7) who want every detail perfect down to the colour of underwear, just make the game tedious and bogged down in too much detail.

Personally, I don't think it's vital to know what colour underwear my NPCs are sporting, either, but as a GM, it is nice to have a fully-fleshed campaign world that is at least as consistent as our own.

BRIAN G. WILLIAMS, Hedington: I would like to agree with Neil Grant's 3rd. letter (LBTS #6). I would like to see some discursive articles on the role of trade, money, transport etc. in a fantasy world. I think your argument against it falls down in two places:

1) You say such articles have little relevance due to the presence of magic. However, magic, even in AD&D is very expensive, as are magical beasts. This means that it should be inaccessible to the average man, and so trade would be naturally unaffected.

2) Some of us run campaign settings (eg. Middle Earth is an excellent example) where magic is very low key and kept under a tight rein. Hence transport and trade are very much like they were in the middle ages. So more articles on trade, etc. as Neil suggests.

FRANCISCO FRASQUILHO, Kent: What about magic? Are many of the present systems logical? Why should large groups of spells be placed under a collective "power" level when some deal with totally different concepts (such as divination and necromancy)? Surely it would be more logical if a magic-caster advanced in skills separately. MERP comes close by using spell lists concerning the Essence and the Gods' powers. Also, how come wizards suddenly 'know' how to cast a spell one day and the next day forget? Shouldn't magic be powered from within or from some major power outside the caster? What about the "Will and the Word" concept of instant magic that can be produced by those strong in mind, such as in the Belgariad. I personally think that the ideas of Lyndon Hardy in his book "Master of the Five Magics" are sensible (where five separate magics require years to master), but who knows?

Tut, tut, Mr. F. Didn't you read *Adventurer* #2 and #3? Fire On High? No? Well, you can still back-order them you know!

ROBERT BLINKHORN, Cheshire: In reply to Simon Nicholson's letter (LBTS #8) regarding my article on religion for CoC (ADV #7), I have the following opinions: Firstly, I do not feel that my article treated any of the religions discussed in a derogatory way, but if there are any tribal shamans amongst the readers of *Adventurer*, then I apologise. Secondly, as CoC is a game, it is difficult to discuss it without converting the subject under discussion into terms readily usable within the game's infrastructure. I would also like to discuss with the prolifically critical Mr. Nicholson the importance of mankind within the universal scope of things, but as I and no doubt he are totally insignificant, I won't bother.

In reply to Kevin Hassall's letter of the same issue, firstly the decision to 'ignore' the various religious philosophies and tenets was a deliberate one. I did this because *Adventurer* is a fantasy and SF games magazine, and not a forum for the discussion of the world's religious beliefs and modes of worship. I assumed that if a Keeper decided to adopt any of my suggestions, then he would endeavour to conduct some form of research into the background of the relevant religion before allowing his players to use a religious character. In reply to the individual points raised by Kevin, I can only say that the editor's comments echoed my own, only much more eloquently than I could.

PAUL WEATHERBY: I find the arguments about the Cthulhu Mythos in the letters page pointless and dull. Much as I love the game, I think these people are getting a bit carried away. It's not real, you know. Personally, I prefer horror tales that are a bit closer to home, or which concern creatures of real legend (if you see what I mean). There are an awful lot of good horror authors around today, and let's face it, horror is only fantasy set in a world that we *almost* know. A few D&D players could do with reading some horror stories, to remind them that monsters are meant to be frightening, strange, repellent, not just cardboard cutouts with hit points!

TOM ZUNDER, Sheffield: I really must protest at the attack on my good friend Rich Crawley (LBTS #7). I don't think that Aidan understood Rich's comments at all, and I find his accusation that Rich is a fanatical AD&Der very funny indeed, since I know that he has never even played the game! What Rich was probably trying to say was that *Adventurer* should support the regular mass of games and gamers who make up the gaming public, rather than recklessly follow the latest fashion, as the product hits the shelves, only to drop it when sales peak. In this I agree with Rich, and also with Aidan, that we shouldn't ignore new games, but blend the mix, and hopefully use wider interest articles and multiple/systemless scenarios.

GEOFF TURNER, Oxford: I had to shake my head in sorrow and disbelief at Janet Vialls' article (ADV #7). A failure of the imagination, indeed! Particularly lamentable was the line;

Traditionally elves are soulless... frequently detached in their outlook. The human partner in a relationship may begin to regard this as coldness...

Is that all that soullessness means, then- an inability to get on with people? The stark alienness of Faerie reduced to a case of acute introversion? And because it isn't 'logical' to Ms. Vialls that dwarfs and goblins might find humans more attractive than their own kind, then (stuff the folklore) faeries who exchange their offspring for a human child must just be suffering from post-natal depression. According to Ms. Vialls, Alvis (the dwarf whom Thor punished for lusting after Sif) must just have been a dwarven deviant, Nimue seduced Merlin because she's a frigid nymph who can't make out with her own "species", Morgan Le Fay becomes in this tedious reworking just a half-elf with an unhappy childhood, and Bertilak is just an overbearing over-achiever I suppose...

This is "fantasy by numbers", and anybody can do it. Just snatch a few ideas from myth and pad them out with a bit of nifty "how about..." stuff. Unfortunately, it's no substitute for creative imagination. Fantasy is the stuff of dreams, you know, not yawns!

Well said that man in Oxford! Somebody who still has enthusiasm for fantasy, no doubt. However, Janet herself stated that she is not a simulationist gamer, but seeks instead to create an "internally consistent, interesting background for roleplaying" (ADV #8)

JUDGE DREDD, Hall of Justice: Failure to print Judge Dredd scenarios: 35 years on Titan. Failure to print Judge Dredd column: 25 years.

The law makes no deals to citizens who refuse to take action to please a Judge, so get thinking or it's knee-popping time...

Geeez, I didn't know Judges read *Adventurer*; I didn't know Judges *could* read! In truth, we have to discriminate against articles and scenarios for game systems which are so heavily provided for via other magazines. People don't want to see the same stuff TWICE a month!

DAVE KITE, Salisbury: Ian Pearson's idea (LBTS #8) of reviewing comics is a good one, but I don't think it would fit in with *Adventurer's* format. As for James Cockburn and Simon Nicholson's theory on the changing of a vampire, I'm afraid they've slipped up. As you said yourself in #5, "If the size of a particle increases, without a corresponding increase in mass, then its density is lowered". Therefore,

using this law of metamorphosis, it is not safe to assume the bat form to be of mass 3kg. It would be much denser, or it's possible the human/vampire form would be less dense than that of an "average human". One more thing... I noticed a 'buxom young lady' on the cover of #8. Please don't fall into the trap of doing this on all covers!

MICHAEL EMBLEY, Grimsby: Although there are many features in *Adventurer* that are of little use to me personally, I realize that many others will find them useful so I won't be selfish and complain about them.

Hopefully, *Women In Roleplaying* may help encourage more females to enter into the hobby. But this will only happen if both existing players and professionals make a purposeful effort to encourage female players, by losing any old, outdated ideas about females in society. This includes little things like the woman portrayed on the cover of issue 8. Tut, tut.

Okay, Dave and Michael. I consider my wrists well and truly slapped! Remember, though, that I didn't paint that cover. Also, it's interesting that besides being a trite sexist, nobody criticised it for being racist, blasphemous, violent or horrific. Nevertheless, I still think it was a good cover, and illustrates the feel of adventure gaming well.

DARREN FAROOQ, Bradford: Come on, then, what's the reason for no P.B.M. section? It's small enough as it is, and now you take it out! I don't know what this magazine is coming to?

RICK LAWRENCE, Exmouth: Why no Figures Front in issue #8? This column is a principal reason for my buying *Adventurer*. The mix of information, reviews and tips is very useful, and the coverage of a different figures manufacturer each issue is excellent.

I would like to endorse John Treadaway's comments in LBTS #8. There is much more to fantasy wargaming than *Warhammer*, not least is making your own rules, which can become a hobby in itself.

Contra to the Vialls' (LBTS #8) comments, fantasy wargaming is not covered in the wargaming magazines (except for John Treadaway's very useful review column in *Military Modelling*). For their attitude to fantasy wargames, see the editorial in *Miniature Wargames* #44. I do agree with the Vialls, however, that *Adventurer* is not the place for historical wargaming-- that is well covered, fortunately!

PETER HUGH-SMYTHE, St. John's Wood: Does this tube go to Harrods?

STEVE TURNBULL, Spirit of Adventure: In issue 7 of *Adventurer*, Kieren Diment wondered whether Live role-playing was merely monster-bashing in a 'zoo dungeon'. Well, I really can't speak for any other company, but *Spirit of Adventure* adventures definitely DO NOT consist of monster-bashing. Every adventure has a plot, and consists of puzzles and traps as well as the sword-fodder. But don't always count on the baddies being fodder- the players don't always win! At *Spirit*, the emphasis is on role-playing- after all, that's what all this is about, isn't it?

DAVE MORRIS, London: Now that you are giving plenty of space to scenarios, how about a page or two devoted to 'cameo' scenarios. The unstructured format means that they are more fun to use with any reasonably free-spirited group of players, and the lack of stats, and setting specific details allows them to be run with any game system appropriate to the genre. It also seems that the very best scenarios are always two pages or less (Bob McWilliams' "Sorry!", Pete Whitelaw's RQ "Cameos", etc.), and Imagine's "Brief Encounters" were generally better than the full-length adventures. Could it be that scenario designers produce long expositions to disguise flimsy ideas?

GRAHAM STOCK, Doncaster: I hope that *Adventurer* will continue with its 'investigative' scenarios. They are a great improvement on other magazines' scenarios. Let it be said that whatever *Adventurer's* other faults, you sure can produce excellent scenarios!

I know. Aren't we just sooper! Tee Hee! Actually, one of the scenarios Graham was referring to, *Wee Dram Of Danger*, was in such a state when we received it that it nearly went in the bin! A little bit of re-touching at the editor's office works wonders, I can assure you.

GRAHAM STOCK, again: Wayne 'Renchu- worshipping- slaughterer- of-innocent- new- Saturnalia- players' Bootleg's column is interesting, although even with free start-ups through *Adventurer*, I for one cannot afford turn fees for PBMs. Would it be possible for *Adventurer* to run something similar to a fanzine-run PBM? I realise that sheer numbers would be a problem, but how about running it through the *Adventurer Club*? You could have it set in *Scatophagium*...

GRAHAM STOCK Chronicles, part 3: Don't let the letters page get any longer, and don't let the agism/sexism thing creep in: I am in support of young gamers, as I am one myself; *Adventurer* doesn't need dirty piccies, and I see no reason why female gamers shouldn't take a full part in the game. That just about covers it, don't you think?

DOUGLAS THOMSON, Turriff: In your review of *Warhammer Fantasy Role-play in Shop Window* (#7), shouldn't you have said that an Elf Ranger has a better chance of being 'fleet-footed' instead of 'flat-footed'? They may be quite similar in appearance and sound, but are quite different in meaning!

I don't know, I should imagine huge flat feet would let you run rather quickly.

DOUGLAS THOMSON: I agree with Mark Ryan (LBTS #7) when he says that you should be printing articles on other monsters. Surely a feature on orcs would be much more useful than one on vampires. After all, nearly every GM who runs a fantasy based game uses orcs regularly. How many do you know who use vampires in most of their games? Do we really know all there is to know about orcs and goblins?

Yes. Everybody knows quite enough about orcs and goblins, especially if (as you say) they use them in every game. Any GM who hasn't already established a background for realistic play obviously doesn't really want one- vampires, on the other hand, tend to be used seldom (if at all) because GMs don't fully comprehend how to use them effectively in a campaign. At least, that was the theory behind the vampire special in issue #5. Meanwhile, back to *Women In Roleplaying*- some of you seem to be obsessed with it.

DAVE MORRIS: The FRP sexism thing involves more than how women are treated in game settings. It is the portrayal of women as objects to drool over that is objectionable, and where this occurs, it undoubtedly turns a lot of women off the idea of role-playing. If a game world is one where women are getting a raw deal, or where one race is lordling it over another, then that's really just one more challenge for the players to have to cope with.

It is undoubtedly the case that women in general have an inferior role to men in *Pavis*, but *Chaosium's* material has never been sexist, whereas TSR's determinedly puerile approach very often is. If you want pure hack 'n' slay then it makes sense to disregard any sort of discrimination (even the evolutionary sort) and just say that women are just as strong and dextrous as men. But in a fully-fleshed out campaign, it is certainly possible to overcome disadvantages due to sex or social class; a player-character doesn't have to be a man (or woman) of action in order to take an active role.

I'll sign off on that point. See you again in issue 10. Don't forget to send in your opinion polls, and your letters.

VOYAGES BEYOND

by Wendy Graham

THE DAVID BRIN INTERVIEW:

It is probably fair to say that there are two sorts of SF- the "let's all leap into space and have adventures" sort, and the speculative sort, based on extrapolations of present knowledge or trends.

Successful newcomer to the writing field David Brin is placed firmly in the latter camp, with nearly all his works based on things which he believes will come to be in the not-too-distant-future.

Since he has been living in Britain for some time and will be continuing to do so, at least until after **Worldcon** in the late summer, and since I have enjoyed reading his books, I took the opportunity of a visit by him to Lancashire to interview him:-

There were times in our interview when I felt that David Brin came dangerously close to being a typical American. He can't really help it, I suppose, since he is an American and with thousands of years of civilisation behind me (as opposed to a few scant hundred behind him), I can only hope that his year spent in Britain will smoothe down the erudition of his pen and tongue.

He is a clever young author (of such good books as **The Practice Effect** and the newly published **The Postman**, which I liked), but there were times when we met that I wished he would stop going on about Myths and Metaphors and start being a bit more human. I longed for him to get hiccups or pick his nose or something, rather than continue the



fountain of opinion on all matters, from writing Science Fiction, to the USA and world politics.

Brin is 35, a Los Angeles-raised American who has upped typewriter and moved to London for a year. He has taught both physics and astronomy at **San Diego University**, as well as classes in creative writing and the philosophy of science.

He has worked for **Hughes Aircraft**, serves as a **NASA** consultant and is chairman of several study groups for the **Californian Space Institute** in San Diego.

As well as publishing several SF novels, his articles have appeared in such publications as the **New Scientist**. His doctoral dissertation was on comets, which knowledge he has used in his soon to be published **Heart Of The Comet**, written with **Gregory Benford**.

David's first novel was **Sundiver**, about the exploration of the Sun and how humanity managed to hurl itself up by its own bootstraps rather than needing outside help. Then came **Startide Rising**, which won both **Hugo** and **Nebula** awards. It was about humanity and genetically engineered dolphins, whose uplift had provided them with manifest intelligence and, in some cases, manifest human qualities (both good and bad).

After that came a change in direction for David, from the SF of serious future extrapolation to a charming world where things got better (not worse) the more you use them (a great comfort while vacuum cleaning in this entropy-ridden world). Finally, at least in Britain, came **The Postman**, a credible tale of a post-holocaust Earth, reviewed in **Adventurer** #8.

If David Brin has a fault in his writing, it is not in the creative department. Rather, he does tend to get a bit bogged down sometimes in plot convolutions which could easily be lost, to the novel's gain. It all gets a bit complex sometimes- and a bit too long:



ON COMING TO BRITAIN:

"I've only lived in Britain for four months, but if there's anything that being an author, particularly in SF, prepares you for, it is the egotistical belief that you can spout your metaphors to everybody and that your observations are perfectly valid.

"To learn what other people are like, you have to go and immerse yourself. That's what I'm doing this year, and I'm having a very good time, people have been very friendly. I've been learning a lot.

"One of the nice things about this profession is that I can **move**- I heard you lot had electricity over here, and that's all I need to practise my trade. So, I'm wading my way through the **British Museum**, and I went over to **Paris** for the first time. I'm really learning a lot, and I'm concentrating on only reading British authors for the next few months.

"I'm here for a year because I got sick of **California**. It's true that this has been my first winter with snow, but I was an old back-packer and mountaineer type guy when I was young, so I brought along my gear, exaggerating in my mind what your winter would be like.

"I got sick of Californian women; they're beautiful but they're all masochists who basically want to be beaten. They claim to be modern, feminist, wanting conversation and all that, then if you don't hurt them terribly, they're just not interested. I'm just not into that. I don't enjoy beating people. I'm not saying they're all physically masochists, but it's not a good relationship if you don't tear it apart every so often, if you aren't mean, if you aren't cruel in some way. This is one of the bad repercussions of **Hollywood**.

"**Spock** is an example of Hollywood propaganda that's been going on for years, trying to convince three generations of western women that logic and the emotions are enemies; which I think is just wretched, really awful, and is probably responsible for the fact that 25 million U.S. women have been abandoned with small children.

"That's a cocktail party explanation for why I came over. The real reason is that all at the same time, I finished a number of responsibilities. I finished my PhD, finished a collaboration with **Benford**, finished my post-doctoral fellowship working on certain things to do with the space shuttle, and those I love seemed to be in decent shape. They could survive without me-- they usually can-- so I decided "what the hell, I'm a bachelor, I have a little cash and I have a moveable profession, why not travel?" It was going to be to **New York**. I wanted to go to a cosmopolitan city, I'd never lived in one; I grew up in Los Angeles which is only a state of mind. But then I heard that **London** isn't cheaper than many places, but it's cheaper than New York. It's not safer than many places, but it's safer than New York. It's not cleaner than many places, but... In addition, it's close to Europe- you may have joined the EEC, but we all know the truth! ".....

Besides doing a lot for sales, was winning the Hugo and Nebula award a great surprise for a callow young author?

"You're talking about **Startide Rising**, which was written some years ago, what do you mean by surprised? I was nervous. Did I expect to win the award? To be quite honest with you, yes. Conceit and arrogance are very easy attributes to have. They mean nothing, they have no correlation with ability. I grew up in Hollywood and saw what ego does to people, and whereas I have one as large as all outdoors (I've lost no hair, it's just my head size getting larger), I have seen how desperately destructive ego can be.

"Having a large ego is only one part of the spectrum. A lot of us males in particular are cursed with it. It's what **testosterone** does to us; we all believe we're going to be chiefs and have five wives. It doesn't matter what the law is today, we've inherited it from the old days. This is a sexual difference. They've found that when women have mental dysfunction they tend to get depressed, which doesn't remove the ability to have children; it's necessary for the tribe- you're insane, but you're still going to provide us with babies. When males go crazy they go quite flamboyant. "**Me Chief**"- What you do is, if he pulls it off, you make him chief and you give him 4 wives. If he doesn't, you throw him of the nearest cliff. He's expendable. The problem is that women are starting to figure it out.

"Most of the crimes throughout history, I believe, have been committed by males with large betrayal egos who have something to prove-

"On the other hand, there is **Gregory Benford**, who not only believes he is God's gift to creation, he knows it. He is

completely relaxed in his self-assurance that this is the case, therefore he can relax; he has nothing to prove.

"When I was working with him on **Heart of the Comet**, he wasn't infuriating or difficult to work with. Two out of the 25 chapters he wrote were absolutely dreadful. I scrawled this in the margin, "*Greg. this is not the reason why I joined this*" and mailed it off to him, and thought 'what have I done?'

"I got a telephone call "*Well Dave, you certainly made your point- very pointedly- but I think I see what you mean*". He takes criticism very well because by implication it means he can get even better, so it makes him charming. He gives **smugness** a good name.

"Once you have enough ego to believe that other people are going to pay you and admire you for your drivel, you have more than enough. Beyond that point, it's sheer destruction."

ON GETTING PUBLISHED:

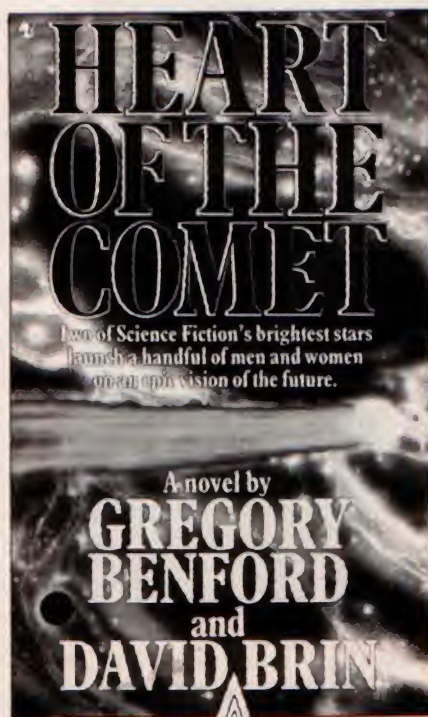
"I circulate all of my manuscripts to at least 20 people before I ever submit them, and I try to insulate myself from the kind of self-indulgences that often come with success- I'm not saying that I have succeeded.

"I didn't expect to sell my first novel to the first publisher. I expected it to take at least two or three more years. I was taken aback, I didn't really know what to do with it.

"I distribute my own work as I go along. About half the people are either SF writers or aficionados, people who I know who are very well-read, and the other half tend to be people I've just picked up in the course of my life.

"I solicit criticism, but I don't solicit advice. Sometimes a suggestion does click, but it's like when I teach writing, I tell my students 'don't take notes on what people tell you you should do with your work. It's your job to figure out what to do, but if somebody comes back to you and tells you 'I didn't understand this scene', don't explain it to them... you've failed and it's your fault'.

"My brother was very mean to me that way. He critiqued my first novel rather savagely. I gave him the first four chapters to read and he gave them back covered in blue pencil marks. I looked through, looked at his comments. Cut, paste, cut, paste, thank God for word-processors, I don't have to do that any more! **Bantam** had never seen a manuscript like mine- there were seven layers! I fixed up those four chapters, used the momentum, wrote another three, photocopied them and handed all seven chapters to my brother. He handed them back to me, all seven uniformly covered with blue pencil. I said, "but the first four..." He said, "Are better". Cut, paste, cut, paste, trim, trim. This went on. Those first four chapters of **Sundiver** are still the worst in the book. I have trouble with openings. Fortunately, my method has never changed. I build up momentum, go



about a fifth way into a novel, by that time my characters have started speaking to me, and I've started getting all sorts of ideas, so it's time to do a print and circulate. By the time it's come back, I'm ready to interleave the forshadowings for that, and the momentum carries me through another fifth, so the first part of my novel tends to be done the most. And I need it. I'm very fortunate to have that technique with my need.

"The worst comment my brother made in the margin, the thing I dreaded the most was s-n-o-r-e, or worse a trail of ever-diminishing zzzzzzzzzzzzzs. That made me quite paranoid about never ever boring the reader. The result is, in *The Postman*, the most common complaint I get is that it's much too short, that it feels sketchy!

ON COLLABORATION:

"SF is the area that has many more collaborations than any other field because we all know each other, and we tend to brainstorm and sometimes forget who had the idea first.

"I did my doctoral dissertation on comets. I was thinking of doing something anyway, and Benford was thinking about doing something on *Halley's Comet*. We got drunk together and started getting an idea.

"In the case of *Niven* and *Pornelle*, they just about live in each other's houses only a few blocks away from each other. They have identical word processors, they swap disks and each one forgets who wrote what, though many of the readers can tell. But in our case, Benford and I live 150 miles apart, or did do then, had incompatible word processors and hated each other's guts, so the result was we had to have an entirely different style. We mapped out the plot and wrote it from three characters' points of view. We each took one character and took turns with the third. The result is three very different voices, and until the last rewrite I was convinced it had been a catastrophe, because I didn't think he understood what I was getting at and vice versa, I was still yelling at him. That's what happens when you're smug- he let me do all the work of yelling, and he wasn't offended at all at being yelled at. The last rewrite, everything fell together, it was just wonderful. I was delighted.

"My doctoral dissertation was about Halley's and related periodic comets; I'm pleased to say that I predicted the dusty surface that they found, and of all the documents that were published before Halley's Comet arrived, *Heart of the Comet* was closest to predicting its size and shape.

ON WRITING:

"I write in **seasons**, spending three months without doing a damn thing and then have a three-month orgy of work. I

can write 10,000 words in a day, sometimes. I said I can, because unlike **Frederick Pohl**, who sits down with his typewriter and spends three hours a day. It doesn't work out for me, I can procrastinate for three months.

"I know roughly where my books are going when I start them. *Heart of the Comet* is the first book I've ever written from an outline, and I had to because Benford and I were doing it together.

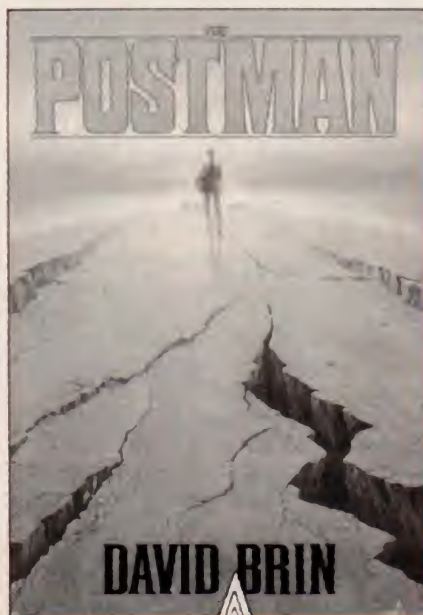
"One of the best things an author can hope to be is an entertaining writer, that's why **Mark Twain** is my hero. So many of these people tend to believe that in order to be taken seriously, you have to write stuff that's opaque. It's the same with some of your better British authors. I've chided some of the better young British authors for this, and I don't know if I'm more wise than them, but it's certainly keeping them out of the American market, which could give them a living wage.

"**Mark Twain** wrote books that by any definition were high literature, but a 12-year old doesn't have to notice the biting social comments or the lovely imagery or the poignant characterisation, or any of that stuff.

"In the case of *The Postman*, the story came first. With *Heart of the Comet*, that's a hard SF novel with a lot of science, a lot of astronomy, biology, speculation about where we might be going in the next 100-150 years.

"All of my books are different from each other. I've just finished the first novel that I've written that is like another of my books- *The Uplift War* is like *Starline Rising* except that it deals with chimpanzees rather than dolphins. They're more fun to play with because you can get grittier with them. The dolphins are so ethereal and poetical and philosophical."

On the day of our interview, Brin was to speak at the **Preston SF** group's meeting, and group members had arranged for him to call in at the local bookshop to sign copies of his book. The



only trouble was, the special large order hadn't arrived. A scant few were hastily rounded up as the staff contemplated this strange phenomenon of an author- it wasn't a specialist bookshop, and weren't used to authors.

Brin had been concentrating on reading British authors while over here, and was persuaded to buy a copy of *The Colour of Magic* while there (I thought the shop could have given him a copy for his trouble):-

"Having written a self-indulgence piece myself (*The Practice Effect*), I must be forgiving of such things. I apologise for *The Practice Effect*, but I'm not ashamed. It is open for a sequel; If I ever have the same desperate need to bleed myself of such terrible puns and self-indulgence so they don't pollute my other work, then I'll write another. It's a good way of getting that sort of stuff out of your system.

David commented on his favourite SF books, *"Earth Abides"*, by George R. Stewart is really nice, but I don't really like to have a single favourite. I have favourites for different sub-genres. As far as exploring the limits of an idea, David Gerrold's *The Man Who Folded Himself* took an idea and just exhausted itself."

ON BEING A SCIENTIST AND AN AUTHOR:

Given that Brin is one of the SF writers best qualified to be a SF writer, by virtue of his scientific laurels (he far out-ranks **Isaac Asimov** on paper, for example), how did a scientist like him get involved in writing SF?

"I wish I was as good a scientist as it appears on paper. I really don't consider myself to be in the first rank. I'm really making more of a reputation in fiction at this point, and my publisher keeps insisting (I suppose by sending me cheques) that I transfer my career over more and more to writing.

"I'm involved in **SETI** (The Search For Extra-Terrestrial Life), and have done some papers on it. Most astronomers are starting to lean away from their enthusiasm, for one simple reason:-

All the geological evidence indicates that the earth has never been visited in the past. All the UFO stuff- they can't be intelligent creatures: look at the way they're described as behaving; buzzing farmers in wheat fields and giving them LSD. That's not intelligent behaviour! It is beginning to look as if life is fairly sparse in the galaxy, though I do believe it's out there, but it's more likely that our distant descendants will meet it as we explore in the future.

"It seems that God didn't plan me to be a physicist, though I worked very hard to get my union card, and I got my PhD. It makes me a good teacher because I get confused a lot. But to be able to make your living at your second-best

profession, and to have as your hobby your first, well thank you, God, I'm not complaining!

"One of the reasons I was attracted to becoming a scientist when I was always much better at words as a child, was that amongst all the professions that I knew, a large percentage of scientists seemed to be people with a sense of humour.

"If I wasn't a writer and a scientist, I'd like to be a teacher; they're today's heroes, they're the people who should be on the cover of *Today* magazine. I think it's a real sin in our society that **Joan Collins**, for example, gets paid more than 500 school teachers combined.

"Frightened children worship the man on the white horse; now we (civilisation) are adolescents, and I'd say that within 30 years we have a good chance of having a truly adult society, and then teachers will be respected again. It's a sign that we are the first civilisation whose principal heroes are entertainers. That is a step up, I believe, from 20,000 years of worshipping warriors.

"The people in this society, the *intelligensia* with the most self-confidence right now, the people who are talking to God in the language he used to make the universe, are the physicists.

A good physicist these days has to have a sense of humour or he can't do physics! He enjoys explaining it and can do so, can explain quantum mechanics to an 8-year old. If you can't explain your idea to an 8-year old in simple metaphors, then you don't know what you're talking about.

"One of the purposes served by literature, particularly the better end of SF is warning, playing mind experiments of where we might be headed. **Frankenstein** warns us of the consequence of our creations. Then there's **Dr. Strangelove** and **Failsafe**, which at the time the airforce claimed couldn't happen, and yet 15-20 years later, we find out that immediately after **Failsafe** came out, the airforce completely revamped its procedures, to avoid accidental war! After **Strangelove** came out, they fired 15 generals!

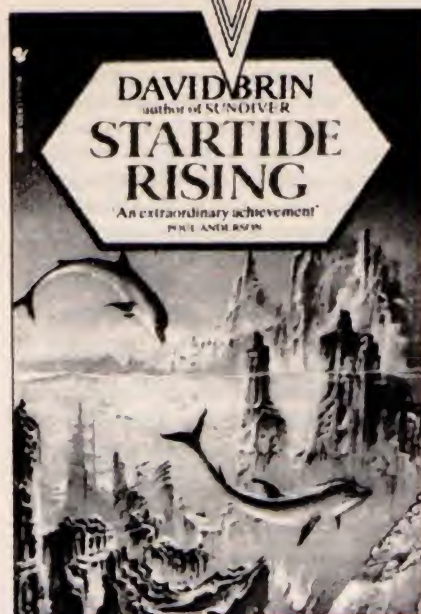
"Warnings are vital, and as we go pell-mell into the future faster and faster, it is more important to try to poke a stick into the ground ahead of us to try to find the quicksand.

"As to whether scientists should have more of a role to play, the average IQ of those controlling nuclear weapons has dropped one point per year since 1945, which is one reason to fear. That's one of the reasons why I wrote a post-holocaust novel, **The Postman**.

"I think we're in a Renaissance, and I don't care whether you think we're going to hell or not, I disagree.

"I'm a proselyte of optimism. All through the English-speaking world there's this attitude of "*Oh gee, we're all going to hell, we're all doomed, look at what terrible people we are*". I've had fun poking away at this because I'm a **contrary**:

When- ever I meet a rigid party-line, a



locked-in set of opinions, I always love to poke at it. I don't like to make people angry. I like to make them happy, but I do like to poke away and get people to think. It's one of the reasons I have my job. I get a great deal of pleasure out of my job, but it's not my first choice; I'd trade a million book bestseller for one paper in mathematical physics that only 12 people understood and would make **Stephen Hawking** leap out of his wheelchair!"

BOOK REVIEWS:

FIRST MEN IN THE MOON.

by H.G. Wells Publisher: Penguin £3.50. Paperback.

You've seen the film and thought you knew the story. Now read the book (if you haven't before) and find out that Hollywood changed the story as usual, adding a female for a little gratuitous screaming and a different ending.

This is one of the first three in a series of Classic SF re-issues by Penguin, and as such the publisher is much to be congratulated. I'd been wanting to re-read the old Wells stuff for ages, and hadn't hit lucky at the bookshop, nor had my local library any copies, surprising though it may seem.

So, not only have I had the chance to read this but also **Flatland** (reviewed below). Coming soon are another Wells, **Men Like Gods**, Philip K. Dick's **Man in the High Castle** and one which was recommended by Patrick Moore and I've not been able to get hold of either, Olaf Stapledon's **Last and First Men**.

And what of Wells' book? On one level, it is a ripping SF adventure yarn, and on another it is a story about something which every SF fan has pondered- how do we react when we make that first encounter? One of the characters in the book wants to be friends, the other is the all-action type. Decide for yourself.

FLATLAND.

by Edwin A. Abbott Publisher: Penguin £2.50. Paperback.

So often had I heard the title and a bit about the book, and once again, I'd tried to get hold of a copy and failed, so it was lovely to read this at last.

Before anybody writes in, yes I do know that you can order books through your local library, but if I ordered every book I wanted to read, I'd never have time to read any new books!

Flatland is a land with only two dimensions. No up or down, only length and breadth. The beings there live their own lives (Plain lives I suppose), until a 3-dimensional being pop's into one of their live's and messes it up for sure by lifting him up.

Trying to tell the others about it, he is promptly sent to the loony bin. Once again a story with a message- crackpots aren't always crackpots.

THE YEARS OF THE CITY.

by Frederick Pohl Publisher: New English Library £2.95 Paperback.

A time-stretch overview of the city of New York. The Big Apple and how it matures in time until many of today's problems have been solved and humans can live more equably and easily in what is today an urban jungle.

Pohl's city is not a Judge Dredd style conurbation, but rather a happier extrapolation of some of the ideas and ideals of which men are starting to dream today as we acquire the technology, and more importantly the will to change the way we live.

If this is the future, it's not so bad, and I liked the book too.

LAND UNDER ENGLAND.

by Joseph O'Neill Publisher: Penguin £3.95. Paperback.

The cover blurb says that this is a work of extraordinary power. The only power it had for me was to bore me, as the hero **Anthony Julian** thrashes on and on about his anguish and torment. I mean, there is a good tale under it all, but I found that I could read one paragraph per page and still follow it all perfectly. Read the foreword to the book in the bookshop, it gives the whole story in a couple of pages anyway.

"Metaphors are what we deal in. If you live in solitude and look in the mirror all the time, you start believing your metaphors, and that way lies madness. One of the signs of sanity is a sense of humour, because if you can laugh at yourself then you're still okay."

Wendy



CLASSIFIED

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WANTED URGENTLY:- Fighting Fantasy bookmark No. 4 ('Creature of Havoc') in MINT CONDITION ONLY. Will pay £3 for this. Contact:- Steven Popper, 29 Foord Street, Rochester, Kent. (0634) 406-073. P.S. Hello Gareth! The Challenge is waiting!!!

NEW CALL OF CTHULHU 'zine requires artwork, scenarios, articles and fiction. Please respond! Send submissions to:- Simon Prest, 27 Enfield Close, Erdington, Birmingham B23 5SE.

SOUTH EAST LONDON "The Outer Ones" require extra players and GM for AD&D/Warhammer. Age 18+ meeting Saturday nights in Sydenham. Contact Mark on 659-6792 (evenings)

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Place: Players' houses
Games: Anything you want/got + extras.
Contact: Doorchester 65153
Notes: Must be able to travel.
NB: asap, as we are 3 against the world

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CLUB meet:- Every Friday at Coalville Tech (Leicestershire) **Games:-** Any RPGs. **Ages:-** 14+ (either sex)
Contact:- Pete on (0530) 61438 (evenings). for full details.

FRP club starting up in the Telford Area needs new members. We play all major RPGs and meet on Saturday afternoons. Enquiries to Chair-Thing, 18 Gloucester Avenue, Dawley, Telford TF4 2HU. Beginners Welcome.

Dragons on the Hill (4) - Role Playing in South London. We play anything. Meeting on wednesday nights in New Cross (SE14). Phone: 732 - 7092 for details.

New Milton RPG Club (Hants.)

Games: Mainly AD&D, CoC but many others played (wargames etc.) included.

Time: Tuesday evenings; 6-10 pm
Place: New Milton Institute (room 5)
Comments: Ages 13+, 40p/night, Anyone welcome.

Contact: Rob Lunn (0425) 610086 or; Mark Ryan (0590) 43422

WEYMOUTH: Wanted; players and GMs (16+) for any RPGs - with view to starting regular Adult club/group.

I can GM Bushido, Traveller, GH, RQ, Car Wars, CoC and more. Please contact in writing or in person:-

Jon Freeman, 3 Coppice Court, Broadway, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 5SA.

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FANZINES

PREAMBLE:

The beginning of the new year always sees a bit of a slump in the fanzine kingdom, and not surprisingly this year is no exception. This is usually due to exams, etc. which have the annoying habit of cropping up just before Christmas.

NEWIES:

There's only one new fanzine this month, called **THE IMMORTAL MINORITY**. It's produced by three people, two of whom produced **BOOKLET OF MANY THINGS** which vanished following Games Day '85. **BOOKLET...** was very much a humorous AD&D zine, and **TIM** is following in its footsteps, though they've tried to print more useful material for AD&D this time. This issue includes an attribute improvement system, reviews, humour, and two small scenarios. **TIM** carries on very much like **BOOKLET...** and this is shown in the rather outdated ideas and unoriginal concept. Good stuff for AD&D rule freaks, but otherwise the cartoons won't hold your interest very long.

PICK OF THE BUNCH:

Scenarios in RPG zines are a bit of a fading sight now, no longer considered in the same light as they were a few years ago. This is mainly due to the criticism levelled at them, since today few readers are prepared to be fobbed off with a mundane dungeon bash. Thus scenarios printed these days tend to be better written, with more thought given over to plot and character. At least that's the idea anyway. The following might prove of interest, being latest issues with scenarios therein:

SPACE OPERATIONS #2 offers a scenario for **Villains & Vigilantes**, a game very poorly supported professionally. The scenario centres around a super

robot designed by the evil Dr. Apocalypse, which is trying to secure the release of its master. The robot is mean, being in the same vein as **Arnold Schwarzenegger's** cyborg in the film **Terminator**. The scenario is very much an initial encounter with the cyborg, but it sets the scene for future adventures very well.

SEWARS has just published an AD&D scenario / campaign thing called **'Tribulation in the Literary Latitudes'**. It's centered around the books of ten authors from Moorcock to Charles Dickens, passing through Mark Twain, and Lewis Carroll. Such an idea, where the characters are thrown into the worlds of these books for brief encounters before being carried off by the space-time continuum, could have been a very interesting setting for a few sessions of play. Instead however, the setting is used as an excuse for a neat dungeon bash, as the PCs hack and slay their way along the Mississippi for example. There are some nice touches, such as having to kill Tigger the Tiger, but this adventure won't find you stretching your brain, only your character's hit points. It may prove useful for those wishing to have a bash (?) at creating their own campaign from the same books, but otherwise it's best left alone.

Another zine with a scenario/campaign is **AMULET**, now on #2. It's a Judge Dredd journey, but don't let that put you off. Richard's planned it well and has even included a free 'indoor nasty' (that is, an NPC who will go along with the party, or not as the case may be...). Anyway, with the title 'There's an awful lot of coffee in Brazil' you can't go wrong can you? Recommended for JD GMs but not for anything else.

We mentioned **IMAZINE** last time, but #16 also has an interesting modern day Cthulhu scenario where the characters all become newspaper journalists reporting on a council eviction which is slightly more than it seems, at first sight at any rate. There's plenty of money involved, and a few ghosts, plus an old man and a nasty man. Unfortunately there's no sex and no Shoggoths...

CEREBRETRON #3 contains a lengthy scenario set in Lovecraft's Dreamland, but I'm sure you don't want to know about such things, so we'll move on...

SACRIFICING THE GOAT #5 has a scenario too, though if we told you it was called **'The Map in the Locust Snacks'**, then you'll understandably (and correctly) surmise that it's not a very serious one. That's actually an understatement - the players must search for a treasure map due to a rather careless person who got himself pushed into a honey toasting machine, meeting a swarm of locusts in the bargain. It's not particularly serious (and the authors take special pleasure in telling you so), but it should certainly provide players with a jolly few hours role-playing. Oh, and watch out for the crazy cupboard because you never know what you'll find....arrggghh!!!

DUE TO A SLIGHT TECHNICAL HITCH, ALEX IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE WITH THE COLUMN. WE WILL TAKE LITTLE PLEASURE IN RETURNING HIM FOR NEXT ISSUE, SORRY!

Yet another zine scenario is to be found in **BUBONIC PLAGIARIST**, #2 of which has just appeared. There are quite a few scenarios actually, one for AD&D ominously called simply **'The Master'**, a scenario specially for Ninja PCs (?), impressive work on Boston for Cthulhu Keepers to get to grips with, as well as a Runequest scenario, which'll come as a pleasant surprise for all you starved RQ GMs. Presentation throughout though, is dreadful.

TIDBITS:

Moving away from scenarios, those of you looking for a new rules system to breathe a little fresh air into your game/campaign need look no further than **TELEGRAPH ROAD** #22. This, dare I say it, contains the best skill system I've ever seen (remember that I'm no longer here - Alex). The system has been developed as part of the Galadra game/campaign, but it is totally

BY ALEX BARDY

FOR EVER?

independant and thus usable in any game. It works on the basis of splitting points between various skills. These are given depending on age, and later on as reward for good play, though they are doled out sparingly. The system is simple and smooth, being both complex and easy to use. Apart from that you get all manner of stuff to read; save the grotty printing/presentation, this zine is very good.

A couple of issues ago, we mentioned **MISSION FROM GOD**, which was the zine which reviews postal gaming zines. Well, soon to come from the same stable will be a supplement which will review RPG zines, from an entirely 'neutral' viewpoint. As a comparison with our own **SLAVE!** it should be very handy, since it'll no doubt offer different opinions and thus give you a more three-dimensional view of the zines reviewed.

ZINE-CON:

You may have seen **KOANCON** plugged elsewhere, but another mention won't hurt. this is the fan convention, where gaming comes first and not the hard-sell of Games-day or the Dragon-meets. There'll be plenty of time to chat to people, play games, and attend the talks demon- strations and seminars usually given over the weekend. Apart from that there'll be a bar, video games, films and Coventry for shopping should you perchance get bored. If you are 16 or over, and have £22 (residential) or £7 (non-residential) to spare, and aren't doing anything between July 31st and August 2nd, you could do well to drop **Trevor Mendham** a line at the address below.

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RELEVANT ADDRESSES:

ALEX BARDY,
28b Gladsmuir Road, Archway,
London N19 3JX (Editor of **EH?**, #9
now available @ 40p + postage;
Editor of **CEREBRETRON**, #3 now
available @ 75p; Editor of **SLAVE!**,
#1 available @ 50p).

BEN GOODALE,
Cairnmore, Crianlarich, Perthshire,
FK20 8QS (Editor of **UTTER
DRIVEL**, #7 now available @ 80p;
Editor of **SLAVE!**).

THE IMMORTAL MINORITY:
Peter Wilkinson, 527 Gleadless
Road, Sheffield, S.Yorkshire S2 2BS
(50p + 18p postage, 36 A5pp).

SPACE OPERATIONS: Brian
Scott, 7 Beach Grove, Springwell,
Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE9 7RB
(£1.20, 40 A4pp).

SEWARS: Chris Bayliss, 12 The
Fryth, Basildon, Essex SS14 3PN
(60p, 34 A4pp).

AMULET: Richard Henderson, 7,
Havering, Castlehaven Road, London
NW1 8TH
(40p, 24 A5pp).

IMAZINE: Paul Mason, Top Flat, 19
Rusholme Road, Putney, London
SW15 3JX
(75p, 24 A4pp).

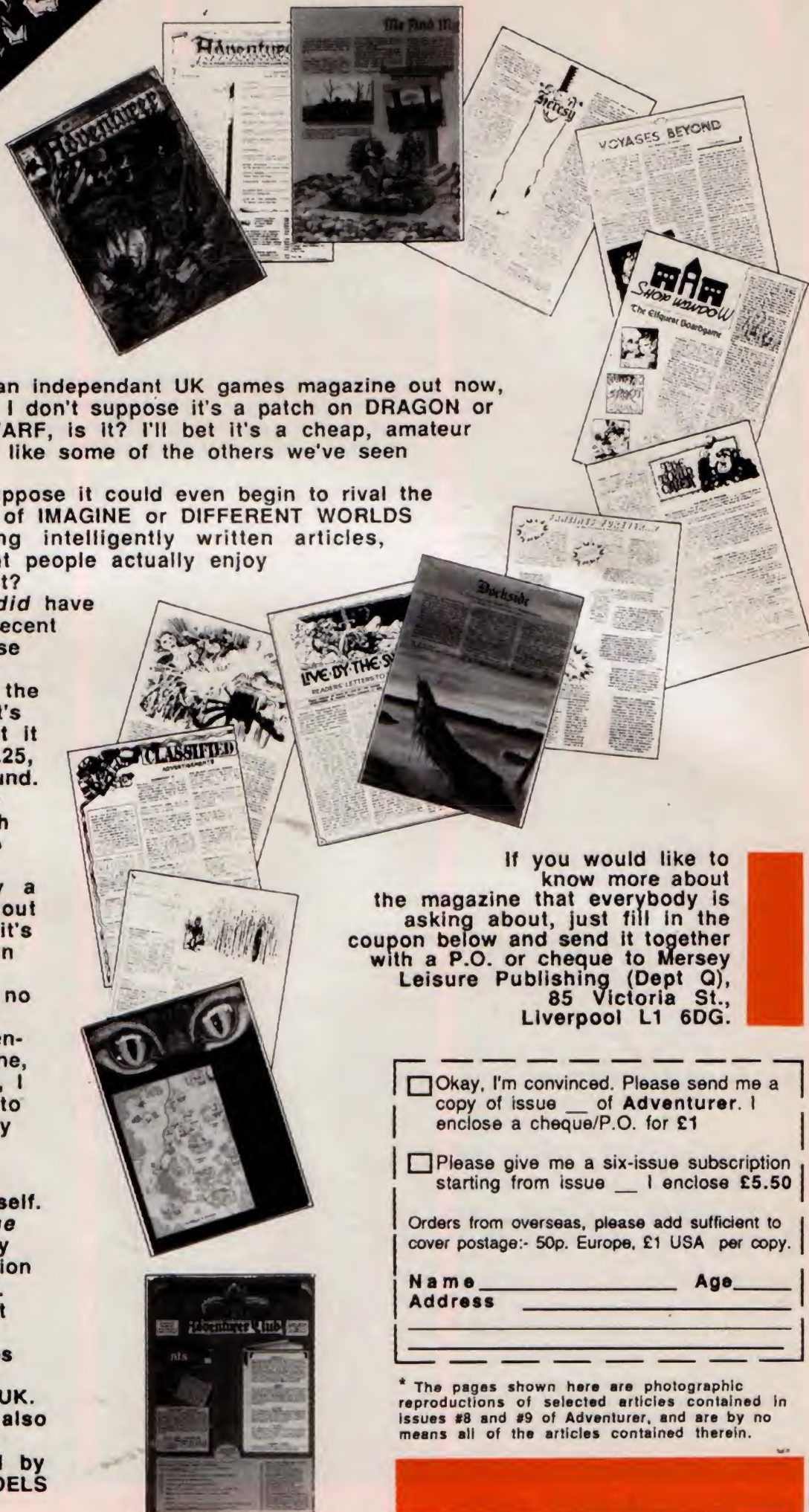
SACRIFICING THE GOAT: Mark
Jones, 16 Orchard Green, Alderley
Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7DT
(60p, 48 A5pp).

THE BUBONIC PLAGIARIST: IT!
(?), 42 Park Hill, Amptill,
Bedfordshire MK45 2LP
(75p, 40 A5pp).

TELEGRAPH ROAD: Jeremy
Nuttall, 49 Longdown Road,
Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4QH
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KOANCON:
Trevor Mendham,
30 Urquhart Court, 109 Park Road,
Beckenham, Kent BR3 1QL.





So, there's an independant UK games magazine out now, huh? Well, I don't suppose it's a patch on DRAGON or WHITE DWARF, is it? I'll bet it's a cheap, amateur production like some of the others we've seen recently.

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"And I suppose there's not much thought given to appearance, either- probably a very simple layout that looks like it's just been thrown together. And I suppose there's no decent artwork.

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CHAOS RULES

ADDING YOUR OWN RULES

BY IAN MARSH

THE INTEGRATED SYSTEM:

Everyone thinks they can improve a set of commercial role-playing rules. Indeed, for most GMs, part of the fun of rolegaming comes from adding to or tailoring the rules to suit your own requirements. Articles of this nature have long been a part of both professional and amateur role-playing magazines: it would appear that no one can resist the temptation of 'tinkering'.

This article, therefore, is about how to approach 'bolt-on' rules to games systems in a reasoned manner. However, the actual ideas involved in modifying a game are the prerogative of the game master and their players, and I don't seek to air my conceptions of the fine details of game design here. If you wish, this article is more of a *blueprint* to make your own rules additions run more smoothly.

As you might expect, the diversity of additions- even for one game system- is quite incredible. For instance, no single critical hit system I've seen for D&D is quite like another. Whilst the difference in approach ultimately results in a rules modification which satisfies the needs of the individual GM and his group, the unique nature of a new rule can make it quite incomprehensible to an *outsider* or a *newcomer* to the group. A variant system's complexities, long since mastered by the group using it, can end up being quite a jumble of unrelated additions, extra rules which 'everybody' knows, but no-one has thought to formulate or even write down. There is often little (or no) thought given over to the idea of producing an **integrated system**.

I'd better explain what I mean by *integrated system*. Simply, it's a set of rules which uses a *common procedure* throughout; so, once the basic principles are mastered, the whole game system is more easily understood. I regard it as an important factor to be considered when constructing a game, although quite obviously there are very few role-playing games which adopt this approach.

Games like AD&D and Warhammer, for instance, take the 'if it works, use it' approach - in other words, anything goes. There's no harm in using this system when there are only a few different procedures to be mastered, since players usually become quite tolerant of their

quirks through constant use. Yet as an aid to learning a game, such irregularities are a hindrance, slowing down play. It's one of the reasons why rolegames are incomprehensible to 'normal people'. If the players start to ask which dice they should use, what they should do next, or what table they should use, then the *flow* of the game is disrupted as the adventure is forgotten for the rules mechanics. A *consistent* game system helps prevent these problems from arising.

An integrated game system, therefore, makes sense. However, when creating such a model, we are up against many obstacles; we must compete with the legacy of early rolegames such as D&D; the plethora of polyhedral dice and the 'necessity' to use them in game design. Charting game development from these 'Dark Ages' shows that designers have been gradually working away from the *anything goes* method. The first step towards *consistency* in a major commercial rolegame was taken by **Runequest**. (Tunnels & Trolls can be discounted because of the variation in the number of dice and the number of dice rolls required to achieve a result, even if it is consistent in terms of the type of die used.) Runequest introduced the percentile dice roll for a chance of success in *both* its combat and skills systems. This system has continued as the mainstay of *Chaosium's* other games (such as **Call of Cthulhu**, **Elfquest**, etc.), thus showing its flexibility. Even so, the system as a whole is flawed since it encourages the use of peculiar sub-systems which bear little or no relation to the core system, such as the 'Resistance Roll tables'. Full progression towards the integrated game system has eventually come in the form of **Middle-Earth Role Playing** and the **Marvel Super Heroes** game: a D100 is common to both, used for reference on skills and success/failure rolls, although the method of its use is different. This eliminates the confusion caused by using different polyhedral dice- certainly a necessity in the case of *MSH* because the average buyer wouldn't have encountered a rolegame before. What I refer to as 'state-of-the-art' role-playing games are now oriented towards *system integrity*: the inventive rolegamer would do well to follow the path laid by game designers.

SUB-SYSTEMS:

The basic tenet of inventing a sub-system is to *think* like the designer of the game. With a fully-integrated system, this is relatively easy- the common approach to the game is easy to see, and therefore the style in which additions should be made is readily apparent. Multi-procedure systems cause severe headaches... where do you start? In *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, for instance, there is a 3D6 based generation system, a D20 based combat and saving throw system (with polyhedral based sub-systems), a *level progression* system tenuously linked to specialist percentile based skills, and numerous tables based on whichever die is most convenient for obtaining a certain probability using that one die. This point isn't intended to knock the AD&D game- after all it does work in its fashion.

The trick in this case is to *identify* the most common theme. In AD&D there are essentially two core system: D20 and D100 based, and so common sense would indicate that whenever possible, your rules additions should be based on these dice as opposed to D4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. To minimise confusion, *combat* additions should be based on D20, and *skills-/random* tables on D100. This may well appear to be very restrictive, but much of the challenge of the additional rule's design lies in *conforming* to the basic principles of the system. This methodical process has its advantages, too. If you're thinking of writing magazine articles, you may well have to communicate with gamers who are only familiar with the 'pure' official system. They might have no access to 'peculiar dice' or they may be confused by a radically different system. Many of the state-of-the-art games now available only contain percentile dice. Should you have any aspirations as a game designer, such 'restrictive' training could well prove useful.

FORMULATING YOUR NEW RULE:

Designing a system to fit in with the game's core can cause problems; it may be that you can't think of a suitable way around part of the system. In this case, leave it alone for a while- the game is probably functioning satisfactorily without this addition and so it can wait. Ideas do

take time to gel, and a thinking period can actually aid the development of a new rule. It should certainly stop the imposition of a hasty rule which you'll only have to modify extensively at a later date.

New rules can also benefit from input from your players. Besides being able to give you useful feedback about their feelings on the rule in play. They are, after all, ultimately going to be affected by any changes you make to the game system. Not all such feedback is good; some of my players object to the slightest hint of a change before I've even finished outlining it, but even this can be useful, as it lets you now what people think about the *notion* itself- often you can become so bogged down in detailing the new rule, and making sure that it fits into the system, that you can overlook its triviality or silliness! Integrating system additions into the game is one part of the battle: it is also important that an addition doesn't over- balance the fragile 'reality' the game already created. It can work two ways; the GM is just as likely to impose a sanction which is too *harsh* as one that is over *generous*. This is usually the case with new *skills* or *abilities* for characters (especially in the creation of new character classes), but can also apply to most other functions that aren't just random number tables. *Instant death* critical hit systems for instance; whilst perhaps realistic, may make the event too likely for an enjoyable game, (especially for the players) and much as I hate using the words, 'game balance' is more important to most GMs and players than an accurate, realistic system. It may help you to forget 'realism' if you just think of the entire system as an abstract representation of reality. A rule which is either unfair, creates ill- feeling or imbalance, should be redesigned.

To be fair, balancing a new rule can be as tough as fitting it into the framework of the rule system. You may think accomplishing both is impossible. For mechanics based rules, it's usually just a case of getting the different modifiers right: that +5 may only need to be a +3. Adequate play-testing will usually sort that out for you. When basing modifiers on *historical* information- the AD&D armour/weapon modifiers 'to hit' spring to mind most readily as an example- the modifier will almost certainly be based on initial feelings, and only later will be adjusted to a final value. (*Mind you, if there is anyone out there who does make a habit of testing medieval weapons out on real people, inflicting actual bodily harm, then I'm prepared to change my opinion!*) If you already have a guideline to effect your changes in the rules then use it- if you choose to ignore any existing guidance, then you are venturing into the realms of *imbalance*. It may well be that you feel a particular rule is unfair (after all this is often why variant systems crop up in the first place), but it will usually have been

created for a reason other than the designer's whimsy. Again, talking it over with your players can help.

The players may also be a *source* of new rules for the game, either by providing inspiration, or by providing them directly, especially in the case of character-oriented rules. Whether it is a new character class, power usage, skill or weapon that has grabbed their imagination, you can be sure that it will usually only be for the benefit of the characters, not the game as a whole. Again, balance is the key that ensures the players' wishes are satisfied without radically altering the game. Bear in mind that a different perspective on any change will always help.

Many of the demands for a change in the rules stem from fresh ideas gained from films or books, and these impressions are often in their efficacy. For instance, a weapon may well have been designed to counter a particular type of armour or style of combat, and it may even have been remarkably successful, but it doesn't mean that in game terms it is automatically better: (I instantly think of the Okinawan employment of the *Sal* to disable the Samurai's sword- in no way is it a superior weapon, however). 'Super weapons' in one form undoubtedly have their disadvantages. Similarly with new character classes- and for example's sake I'll use the *Ninja*- the player's viewpoint can be distorted by their 'awesome' Hollywood powers (special techniques or gimmicks) to the extent of producing something far in excess of the factual source. For the *Ninja*, lethal as they are in the right circumstances, the strange obsession with super-stealth, violent ripping machines, etc. often produces an unbalanced class; this is why there hasn't been an official *ninja* character class until fairly recently, and why, naturally, so many gamers resort to producing their own. If game balance were carefully considered in the first place (the effect of the changes to mechanics, the way the game is played, and so on) more acceptable rules changes would result.

The final balancing act is to ensure that an addition doesn't create any anomalies. It may well be that an 'official' version of a change already exists. The roleplaying hobby has been very productive in its twelve years (or so) of existence, and there has already been considerable development of the older games systems. Some of these have been adapted into the main game, but much is discarded, although the ideas behind a discarded change may well be utilised. It is even possible that an idea already exists within the current framework of the game and this has simply been overlooked. This demonstrates that a thorough working knowledge of any one game is needed before you can add to it.

Integrity and balance are the toughest problems to be solved, and there are only

a few elements of fine tuning left to consider. These are, that the rule should be *functional*, *simple* and *easy to remember*: All of these are linked to some degree.

1. By *functional*, I mean that the rule should achieve what you intended it to. This will most often be demonstrated in play and in the effect that the rule has on the game. If you have designed an addition to the combat system which is meant to simulate the ability of a *hero* to wade through hordes of screaming 'extras' whilst administering a quick and painful death to each of them, then that's all it should achieve. If it starts to affect *archvillains* or special monsters then it is not fulfilling its purpose. If you've considered the effects of game balance properly, then this shouldn't be so much of a problem, but don't lose sight of your intent by becoming involved in the system.

2. *Simplicity* is all down to the preferred style of the gaming group. What one group of players might consider to be the epitome of simplicity, another group might despair over its complexity. Using tables and formulae can be as much part of the enjoyment of rolegaming as the role-playing aspect itself- to some gamers. Admittedly, it's not the style I prefer, but then I tend to forget much of the operation of the rules system in play anyway. If you feel tables and formulae add to the 'realism' of a game, then you should continue to develop this theme, but make them *easy to use and understand*.

3. As I said earlier, all rolegame rules are abstract representations of 'reality' and the number you use and the style they are written in depends entirely on what you think is required; it's a very personal thing. The only important criteria is that the rule should convey the feeling of *realism* in its operation and outcome. If this can be achieved simply, either by using fewer rules, or by keeping the rules shorter and more functional, then the easier they are to use in play, and the easier they are to remember and teach to others.

4. All the factors I've discussed so far contribute to the final point, that of how *easy the rule is to remember*. If you, as the GM, and/or your players can get to grips with a rule without recourse to consulting notes, then play is much faster in its pace. Now no rule system you add to extensively is going to be very *easy* to absorb straight off, but the easier you make it to *understand*, the easier it becomes to *remember* and *incorporate* readily into your game.

Additions that are either awkward in play, cause delays or frustration, are heading for redundancy; you might just have well saved yourself the time and effort involved in designing them. Bear in mind the points I've raised and you could well avoid many of the pitfalls that lead to a rule being dropped through disuse. You should at least have a clear idea about how to *approach* game design, anyway!



FIGURES FRONT

By Mike Willis



This issue, I would like to describe a few small scale scenic effects suitable for improving the bases of single figures and wargames units.

Flock

Railway modellers "Flock" can be used as an alternative to painting to give bases a "grassy" look. It is readily available from hobby shops and is supplied in various grades and colours.

To apply it, first paint the base with either a white "PVA" glue or matt varnish, and then sprinkle the flock over it (do this over a small box or large sheet of paper to avoid mess and wastage).

When this is set, gently blow off the excess flock and leave it to dry thoroughly. The only disadvantage with this method is that it is not very durable and therefore not suitable for figures which will be handled a lot.

Rocks And Boulders

Boulders can be made quite simply by glueing small stones or pebbles of a suitable size and shape to the base before applying filler. They can then be painted in appropriate shades of grey or brown, or even left in their natural colours.

For smaller rocks or a 'rubble' effect, cat litter (available very cheaply from pet shops) is very effective.

If you wish your stonework to be a specific shape, or to be moulded around the original base of the figure, it is best to make it from clay or putty. Clay is better for more rounded rocks as it can be smoothed with a little water, while epoxy putty can be left to nearly harden, and then cut with a knife to give a more 'flinty' look.

Cracks and striations can be etched into the 'rock face' with a sharp knife, to give a more natural weathered look.

Plants

Simple plants can be made quite effectively from a number of common or garden (!) household items, such as string (the 'hairy' variety) can be used to simulate long grass; simply untwist it and cut it into approximately 1" lengths. Take a clump of the strands about 1/8" to 1/4" in diameter and push it into the filler while still wet; as the cement hardens, it will hold the string in place. If using a clay base, drill a small hole for the strands and glue them in position. When completely set, the 'grass' can be coloured with green ink and trimmed to length with scissors.

To make a small bush, cut a piece of railway modellers lichen to the required

shape and size, and then coat it with a watery solution of PVA glue. Sprinkle this with rubbed dry parsley or mixed herbs to represent the leaves.

Twigs from the garden make excellent trees, but don't use anything too big or it will just overpower the figure. Instead, a short tree stump set into the filler or a half buried fallen branch are more acceptable.

More exotic looking plants are best made from epoxy putty; for some idea of what can be achieved, look at the work of Citadel's Kevin Adams or consult a book on houseplants.

Here are a few simple examples:-

Mushrooms/Toadstools

Roll a small piece of putty into a ball and then, using the fingers, flatten into the shape of a small 'Cadbury's Chocolate Button'. When this has partly set, push it onto a pin or cocktail stick and leave it to harden completely.

The 'stalk' can be trimmed to a suitable length and glued into a small hole in the base; paint in the brown tones, or red with white spots for a 'Fly Agaric' look.

Broad-Leaved Plants

Roll out some putty on a piece of paper sprinkled with talcum powder (to prevent sticking) until it is about 1mm thick, and then cut out a number of leaf shapes with a sharp knife, etching the surfaces slightly to represent veins in the leaves.



When these have partially set, remove them from the paper and form them in layers around the head of a pin, bending the tips outwards and downwards.



Leave the plants to harden, fix to the base as before, and then paint them in greens or more unusual colours such as orange and purple.

Spiky-Leaved Plants

These are made exactly as above, except

that the leaves are formed from small pieces of putty rolled between the fingers into spiked shapes.



Weapons

Broken or half-buried weapons and shields, severed heads and limbs, or even smaller creatures, are appropriate adornments for fantasy figures. Most of these items are available commercially (Heroes Miniatures make a range of weapons and heads available separately, and Grenadier UK have a suitable pack containing familiars and homonculi) with the exception of arrows which are presumably too delicate to cast. These can be made using (yes, you've guessed) pins and epoxy putty.

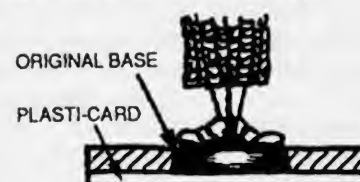
Cut the flat end of a pin, roughen the surface with sandpaper and then mould a small blob of putty around it like a match-head; leave this to harden and then file into the shape of a set of flights.



Arrows can either be pushed into the base or fixed into the shield or body of the figure itself. In the latter case, a small hole will have to be drilled first.

Paving

Mould a piece of clay around the figure base and then smooth it flat and level.



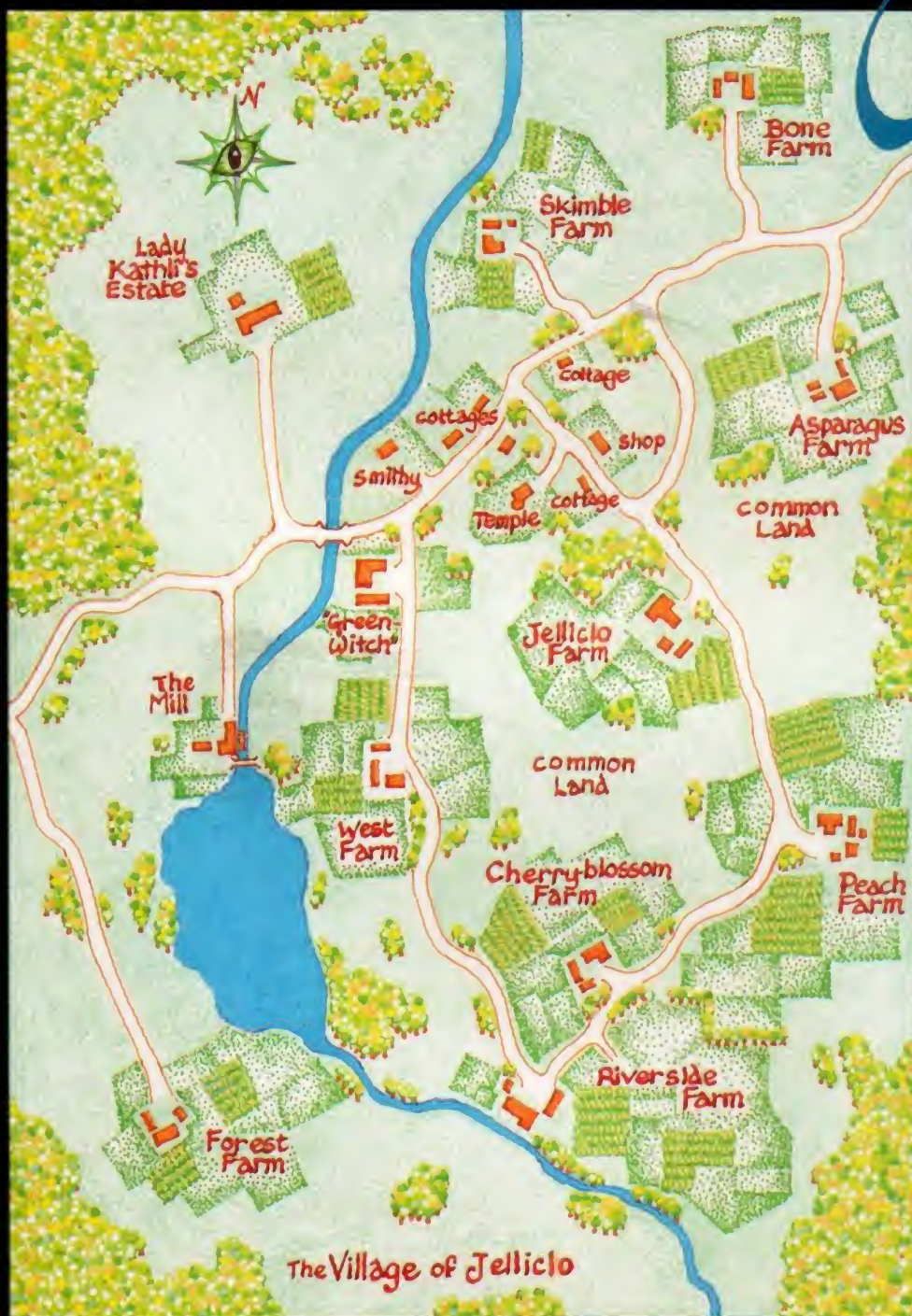
Using the flat of a knife blade, and a little water (just like icing a cake!); as this starts to harden, cut the edges square. When the clay is dry, give the whole base a thin wash of tetrion filter to give it a slightly grainy texture and then paint it grey with white highlights.

Finally, the joins of the paving stones can be represented by scoring them into the surface with a file and then painting them with a wash of black ink or acrylic paint.



Cats

A scenario for RuneQuest III characters with skills of around 50% and little sorcery or rune magic, or for AD&D characters of 4th to 5th level.



By Peter & Janet Vials



Referee's Introduction:

This scenario is set in the small, isolated state of **Sohdhor**. This should be situated in an easily-defensible region, with a number of hostile and militaristic states nearby. A suitable location would be a valley amidst mountains, or on an island. (See *Women In Roleplaying, Adventurer Issue #8* for more information on Sohdhor).

Arrival:

The scenario starts with the party in a nearby state or city; they will be approached by an attractive woman in her late thirties, who asks them to carry a parcel to **Charmby**, the capital of **Sohdhor** for her. They will be paid a reasonable sum for the job. If the party ask questions, they will learn that the woman works for the Sohdhorian ambassador, and that the parcel is a collection of diplomatic documents.

This parcel is sealed; if the party break the seal, they will not be paid for the job, and will be accused of spying when they reach Charmby. The referee will have to determine events thereafter! Within the parcel is a large number of letters and reports, all in code. If the party manage to break the code, they will find that the information, while politically sensitive, is not of any real use to them.

The party should know rumours about Sohdhor already: it is a land of sorceresses, where monstrous women rule, controlling their men by sorcery. Neither gods nor cults hold sway, and magic is queen. "*Never trust a Sohdhorian witch*" is a catchword in all the surrounding lands.

Assuming the party accept the job, and are not foolish enough to break the seal, they should arrive at the borders of Sohdhor. (The referee should feel free to include incidents *en route* suitable to his/her campaign). The party will be met by a force of mailed warriors, all men, who will demand to know their business. The few women in the area are clad demurely in dresses, as befit women, and clearly aren't trying to be men, as the party may have expected. The border guards will warn the party that violence (and particularly violence against women) is a serious crime under Sohdhorian law, and that they should not let their barbarian instincts take control. The impression the party should get is that these warriors **despise** them - and also despise themselves for being warriors. They will only show respect to any sorcerers with the party.

The party will then be free to ride to **Charmby**, the capital of Sohdhor. During the journey, they will see the pastoral regions of Sohdhor around them: men work in the fields, women are working in the yards washing clothes and fussing over children. It is apparently a perfectly normal pastoral region.

Charmby:

The capital is hardly worthy of the term "city": it is barely more than a town, with only a thousand inhabitants at best. On the other hand, it is clean and bright, with trees and greenery all around. The

architecture is striking and attractive, and the city's inhabitants seem cheerful and well-dressed. The party will be directed to the Palace, where they will be interviewed by an imposing woman in her late sixties (the second-in-command of the **Sohdhorian Secret Service**). She will thank the party gravely for bringing the documents, and pay them the agreed amount. She will then chat generally about the lands around, listening to their reactions to her questions. She is actually deciding if they are a decent group (rather than mindless killing machines, like most adventurers). If she decides that they are trustworthy, she will ask them if they are willing to carry out another small job: She has received a message via pigeon post that there is some sort of trouble in the little village of **Jelliclo**, to the east. The party are to ride out there immediately, and report to **Lady Kathli** at her estate.

Assuming the party accept this job as well, they will ride for a couple of hours, arriving at the edge of the village of Jelliclo in the early evening.

Double Trouble:

As they ride in towards the village, they will suddenly see to one side, a burst of ethereal flames from behind a dip. If they go to investigate, they will see a girl standing off to one side looking angrily at another girl curled up on the grass, gasping. The party should assume that she is the victim of the sorcery they have just witnessed... The latter girl is **Hanli**, one of the "terrible twins" (see character descriptions below); she is actually doubled up in laughter over her twin's disastrous attempt to produce an illusory ball of fire (**AD&D**: using Dancing Lights). As the party approach, though, she will rise to her feet and order the party to halt. The other twin will jump in to support her sister, and the pair will try to take the party hostage. ("A group of men wandering around out of control - they can't be up to any good!") If the twins are seriously hurt in any way, Kathli will have the party executed summarily. On the other hand, if the party merely capture the twins, and return them to their mother, Kathli will be amused at the twins being brought down a peg or two.

The Lady of the Manor:

Lady Kathli will welcome the party, trying not to let her distaste show. She will treat the largest warrior as the leader, as she knows this to be the norm in other lands. She wishes the party to investigate a couple of unpleasant incidents in the village: A local farm, **Peach Farm**, has been attacked twice. The first time, three nights ago, a field of crops was destroyed by some large animal. The second time, last night, one third of the farm's livestock was slain bloodily. The only eyewitness, an old farmhand, claims that he saw a horrible shaggy monster with glowing yellow eyes and giant claws.

Kathli suspects that the monster is actually a **weretiger** that has been in the village for nearly 30 months; until now, though, it hasn't caused any harm. Unfortunately, Kathli has not been able to

find out precisely who the weretiger is (its presence has hardly been a major concern to her). She thinks that it comes from one of the four farms: **West Farm**, **Riverside Farm**, **Peach Farm** and **Cherry-Blossom Farm**, and will suggest that the party investigate those four farms in particular. She has seen it running in the moonlight, and is aware that it occasionally goes hunting in the woods nearby, but is certain that it has never harmed anyone. She does not understand why it is now turning vicious (assuming the monster causing the trouble is the weretiger). She wants the party to investigate and to find out why **Vandar's** farm is being attacked. She doesn't want the party to **kill** the weretiger; she doesn't believe that the creature is malevolent, and she wants to know what is going on.

Kathli will give the party basic information about the structure of the village, and about the people at the farms. The referee should ensure that the information she gives doesn't give away too much! Lady Kathli can also confirm that no-one to her knowledge has been attacked by a weretiger in living memory in Sohdhor. She will offer reasonable payment.

Unfortunately, Kathli cannot give the party any open aid or support. She is a major figure in Sohdhorian politics; if she is seen to be employing warriors, it will damage her political position. As such, she would prefer the party to take up residence in the local inn, rather than stay at her estate.

Jelliclo:

The village is fairly small, built mostly of stone and wood. It is warm and sunny, and the farms are growing warm climate crops such as fruit and corn. The village contains a large number of cats, mostly black and white (there was a large and active black and white Tom in the area a few years ago), and the party should always be aware of cats watching them, or nearby. The cats should be a useful tool for increasing player paranoia - they will find it difficult to tell which are familiars, and which are just showing natural feline curiosity! If the players are really paranoid, hint that perhaps it is the cats that are actually in control of the village... (this could be remembered as a rumour overheard before the party set off on this adventure).

The Villagers:

1. Lady Kathli's Estate:

A large, rambling stone manor house, occupied by **Lady Kathli**, her husband **Fithder**, her twin daughters **Hali** and **Hanli**, two serving maids **Olda** and **Lizi**, and the old family retainer, **Phann**.

Lady Kathli

She is a noblewoman; an intelligent and kindly middle-aged woman, and a powerful sorceress. She is small, not particularly attractive, and rather fiery at times, with short, curly dark hair (probably dyed). Her eyes are clear brown, and piercing. She speaks with a 'posh' accent, is kind to her





servants, and lives well. She is interested in children and looks after her own daughters very well. Born in Charmby, the capital of Sohldhor, she was brought up a sorceress. She swiftly became interested in politics and is now one of the Princess's closest advisers (hence she is only in the village for some of the year).

She runs the village fairly, as well as organising sorcery classes for the young women of the village (as well as Vann). She has an aged grey familiar cat, **Deut**, who spends most of his time curled up asleep in awkward places.

Fithder

The husband of Lady Kathli, he is a tall, handsome man in his fifties. Fithder runs Kathli's estate (gardens, small orchard, and the house itself); he is an efficient manager, but looks for spark or imagination to Kathli. In fact, he is quite intelligent himself, but likes to have Kathli's consent and agreement before taking any major steps. He is fond of the twins, and fair with the servants, but generally a little colourless.

Hali and Hanli (The terrible twins!)

These are identical twin girls, now in their mid-teens. Both are learning sorcery, and are becoming moderately proficient. Kathli is proud of them. They have a strong rapport with each other, and get on well with the servants. Both delight in practical jokes, and are equally fond of their mother and father (though they tend to be a little patronising about him). They are both big-headed, and believe that they can cope with anything.

Phann

An old family retainer of Fithder's family, Phann joined Kathli's family when she married. He does much of the hard work around the estate. He is also a confidante of Fithder, and the two tend to give each other support against their womenfolk. Now in his late fifties, he is beginning to become a little querulous.

2. West Farm:

West Farm is a large and prosperous farm near the edge of the village, run by **Janarta** and her husband **Lucius**. The land has been in Janarta's family since they came to Sohldhor two centuries ago with **Anasa Sodorra**. Also on the farm are Janarta's four children, and her grandpa **Taliu**, an old, rather grumpy man: as far as Taliu is concerned, nothing is ever right. He tends to drink heavily, which just makes him more bad-tempered. His money-pouch has recently been stolen.

The farm has two labourers; a young woman called **Larissa**, and the old man **Jathro**. Jathro is somewhat lazy, and given to rambling reminiscences.

The farm has a small black cat, **Mist**, with a reputation for cleverness and playing tricks. Mist knows what Larissa is, and is friendly with her; he will not give her away.

Janarta

She is a successful and prosperous farmer, running her farm efficiently and

well. Her major responsibility is to her farm, and everything else comes second. Despite this, she is a generous, pleasant woman who does what she can to help others. Her husband **Lucius** is the son of a farmer in a nearby village; they married after a whirlwind romance, and are still very much in love. They have four children; **Coll**, **Hadriss**, **Jorn** and **Kiri**, all under 21; they only have one daughter, which disappoints them. (Lucius feels somewhat guilty about this, but Janarta has never blamed him for it). Janarta is an attractive and forceful woman in her late forties; **Lucius** is a not unattractive man in his early forties.

Larissa

Larissa is a **weretiger**; she came to Sohldor from a distant jungle land, where her parents were killed by a weretiger when she was ten. She was mauled in that attack, and contracted lycanthropy. She is not evil, and does not enjoy hurting creatures or people. On the other hand, she enjoys being a weretiger. She is in full control of her shapechanging: in tiger form, she has strength and power that humans can only dimly imagine. As a tiger, she can be alive, her senses vibrant, and drink in the tastes and smells of nature. Every now and again, she feels the urge to change forms and run as a tiger in the wilds. She is, though, well aware that most cultures treat her as a monster to be hunted down and slain because she is **different**, not because she is in any way **evil**. She has been running for most of her life, but came to Sohldor three years ago, and at last feels that she has found a place where she can be happy. She is hard-working, and both Jathro and Taliu order her around and make her work far harder than she needs to, but she feels obliged to do as she is told.



Unfortunately, she had become very friendly with **Teega** of the **Riverside Farm**, and at last made the grave mistake of telling Teega what she is. Teega told her that the other villagers will kill her if they learn what she is. Larissa doesn't want to have to flee again; Teega is blackmailing her into attacking Vandar's farm by threatening to tell the villagers what she is. She dislikes what she is being made to do, and now hates Teega, but doesn't want to leave her new life and her friends here. At the moment, therefore, Larissa is feeling bitter and trapped.

She sees the adventurers as a serious threat to her - such people always try to kill her. She has a strong instinct for self-preservation, and if the hunt gets too close, she will flee and leave Sohldor, pausing only to kill Teega for betraying her.

3 Riverside Farm:

Riverside Farm is somewhat smaller than West Farm, but is fairly successful. It is run by **Teega** and her husband **Karr**, plus their daughters **Jen** and **Lani** and Jen's husband **Bharul**. Jen has two young children (daughters **Kaydi** and **Ilsa**).

Also on the farm are two labourers; **Ranth**, an ex-slave, and a farmgirl, **Daea**, who has taken Ranth under her wing and is showing him the ropes.

Teega

Teega is a small, irascible woman in her early fifties; her hair is greying, but she is still full of vitality and life. She is married; her husband **Karr** is a strong, fit man a few years younger than her.

Teega is the undisputed head of the household; she is a clever, imaginative woman with a flair for devious plans and ideas. She also has an unshakeable faith in the natural superiority of women, and considers that men who rise above their stations are abominations. She is responsible for the weretiger attacking Vandar's farm: she feels that Vandar should not be permitted to run a farm on his own. He should either marry or bequeath the farm to some woman. If he will not, he must be driven out of business. As such, she is ordering Larissa to attack Peach Farm so as to bankrupt Vandar.

Teega is not particularly evil - she is just sexist, bigotted, and quite incapable of considering any point of view other than her own. She is also cold-blooded and ruthless, and has no qualms about acting outside the law if it will bring about her desired result. Teega is also quite willing to see Larissa die once her job is done ("Well, a weretiger is an un-natural abomination, isn't it?"). She assumes that there is no danger of the party talking to Larissa.

Teega is not happy with her farmhand, **Ranth**. She feels he is above himself, and always seeks to put him in his place whenever she can.

Teega has a cat familiar, **Griddle**; she uses Griddle to learn what is going on in the village. She also has a very pretty Persian Blue cat as a pet.





Lani

Lani is Teega's daughter. She is unmarried, and was recently refused by Vandar when she proposed to him. She is angry about this; she very much wanted to own Peach Farm. (Teega is angry too; she feels that a man who is shown favour by a well-placed woman should not reject her). Lani takes after her mother, and is fully aware of Teega's scheme. She is giving her mother all the aid she can. By nature, Lani is clever and rather catty, with a tendency to get annoyed if she doesn't get her own way. She is rather attractive, and gets a lot of pleasure from dallying with the young men in the village. She is also a moderately successful sorceress.

Ranth

Ranth, a farmhand at Riverside Farm, is an ex-slave who escaped from a harsh, militaristic state to the north two and a half years ago. Ranth finds Sohldhor in general, to be unnatural and wrong; he is not certain that he is happy here. Ranth rather resents the other farmhand at Riverside, **Daea**, who shows him unconscious condescension; he is stronger than she is, and yet she doesn't consider him to be superior. He also feels (correctly) that Teega dislikes him. Ranth is becoming a little paranoid. He does not want to leave **Jelliclo**, but is becoming uncomfortable here. During the scenario, he will hear Teega discussing tactics with Lani, and jump to the conclusion that Teega is intending to wipe out all the male inhabitants of Jelliclo; from then onwards, he will sleep out in the fields, so that he cannot be slain in his sleep!

4. Peach Farm:

Peach Farm is a rich, prosperous farm on some of the best farmland in the village. Since Jelliclo's founding, it has been in the hands of a major family, but the head of that family was killed in a riding accident some three years ago. Now, her husband, **Vandar**, is running the farm in her place.

With Vandar are his two sons (**Ghani**, aged 10, and **Ghol**, aged 8) plus his daughter **Eldha**, aged 5. The two boys are typical little brats, spending their time making trouble around the village. The daughter is a quiet young thing, who tends to stay indoors and play on her own. Other villagers are saying that this is unnatural, and that the all-male environment is damaging her development.

Also at the farm are two labourers, **Indis** and **Olphess**; both are male, and in their forties, and have been at the farm for many years. Olphess quite likes having Vandar in charge, and is a stalwart supporter of him. Indis, though, feels that the new way is unnatural, and risks bringing down the anger of the goddesses. He tends to spread awful rumours at the pub about the effect having Vandar in charge is having.

("Wurl, 'e cain't run the farm proper-loike: trees 'uz getting bugs in 'em, 'n' the goats aren't giving 'nuff milk. T'ain't roight").

Peach Farm's cat is **Tugger**, an awkward animal with a penchant for stolen cream.

Vandar

Vandar is a handsome, burly man in his early thirties. He comes originally from another village on Sohldhor, but came to this village when he married. His wife was the owner of Peach Farm until she died. The ownership of the farm passed to Vandar; the other villagers assumed that he would remarry (there are a number of eligible women in the area), but he did not, and ran the farm himself. This has caused some surprise (not to mention some annoyance) in some villagers; others are supporting his bravery in 'going it alone'.

5. Cherry-Blossom Farm

Cherry-Blossom Farm is a comfortable, reasonably-sized farm, marked by a large cherry orchard. It is run by **Kay** and her husband **Olduss**.

Kay is a woman in her mid-twenties, who has only just taken over this farm. Unusually, her husband Olduss is a couple of years older than she is. They have only been married for a few months, and seem very happy together. Also living with them is Olduss' mother, **Lejunni** (a moderate sorceress). This farm used to belong to her and her husband (now dead); their daughter has gone to the nearby city as a sorceress of some power, and thus, Olduss is the only person left to inherit the land. Now he is married, Lejunni has retired to let Kay run the farm. Lejunni is still exercising a great deal of control from the background; Kay is beginning to resent her mother-in-law's interference, but doesn't want to upset her husband by telling the old woman to stop.

Lejunni has a familiar, **Jenn**, a small and lazy tabby cat (at night, though, Jenn tends to roam, keeping the farm in order).

Also on the farm, are three farmhands. **Fhalla**, the eldest, is in her fifties, and has been on the farm all her life. She dotes on Olduss and obeys Lejunni without question; Kay, on the other hand, is an unknown quantity whom she distrusts.

The other two are **Jael** and **Thoris**.

Jael

Jael is a young woman in her mid-twenties; she is not particularly attractive and is fairly strong. She is an escaped slave, who came to Sohldhor nearly five years ago. She is considered to be somewhat stupid, but beneath the surface, she has as cunning a brain as any sorceress. She currently has no means to better her lot, but would take any opportunity that appeared to rise in society. (On the other hand, she would not go to a male-dominated society - she wants to better her position). She is cold-blooded and moderately ruthless.

Thoris the Minotaur

Thoris is another farmhand at Cherry-Blossom Farm. He is an escaped slave from a nearby state. He is not evil; he considers that his new life is a vast improvement. Here, he is accepted, and amongst friends. He still has a slight chip on his shoulders at being considered inferior because he is a male, but is rapidly getting used to his lot. He is

hardworking, and becoming quite popular in the village. He does not talk much (his accent is difficult to understand at the best of times), but tends to drink heavily at the Greenwich.

The Temple to the Earth Goddess:

The temple is really only a small shrine to the goddess (a crop goddess common throughout the region).

RQ: A suitable goddess would be **Ernalda**.

Mother Calhia

Mother Calhia, despite her title, is only in her mid-twenties. This is her first parish, and she has only been here for a couple of years. She is a little uncertain and lost, and tends to retreat behind her role as a priestess if flustered, producing platitudes and quotes from the Way of the Earth Mother. She is unhappy about the pressure being put on Vandar, and would like to help him. Partly, this is because she is very attracted to him (though she would not admit this, even to herself). She is not a powerful priestess, but she cares about her flock, and works hard to help them.

Also at the temple is a small cat called **Grizz**: she was once a very pretty cat, but age and ill health have taken their toll.

The Mill:

The watermill is a modern, recently-built structure, and is the envy of the other villages. A number of local villagers bring their wheat here to be ground. It is run by her son **Ylissa** and her son **Yann**. Also at the mill is **Arnuss**, a strong grim man in his late thirties, who provides the muscles required to run the mill.

A small colony of black and white cats live at the mill, protecting the grain from rodents. Among the cats is a small, thin ginger tom, **Macavity**. This is a kleptomaniac cat, delighting in stealing small valuables from all and sundry; these are hidden in the hayloft over the grain store.

RQ: Macavity has been Dominantly possessed by a weak spirit of Avarice, which is using the cat's inherent cunning to carry out its thefts.

AD&D: Macavity was a human thief (level 6), until he annoyed a rather powerful sorceress (who has a sense of humour). Now in his *polymorphed* form, he is trying to collect sufficient cash to persuade a commercial sorceress to return him to human form.

Macavity has only been in the village a few weeks, and there have been a rash of small thefts since he arrived. Note that Macavity is never at the scene of the crime when any witnesses arrive. Needless to say, Macavity is responsible for the theft of the money from **Taliu** of West Farm, as well as for the theft of a brooch from **Kay** of Cherry-Blossom Farm, a bottle of perfume from **Lani** of Riverside Farm, and some money from **Asparagus** and **Skimble** Farms.

Ylissa

Ylissa is a small, wiry woman in her late 40s. She is a good business woman, who





will not allow anyone to get the better of her. She is very proud of her son, and feels that he is almost the daughter she never had. She has been running the mill since it was built. Before then, she worked in Charmby.

Yann

Yann is in his late teens, and is something of a 'Janegirl'; he affects female clothing and mannerisms, and at a distance could well be taken for a female. He is slipping into Lady Kathli's sorcery classes and trying to learn sorcery. Some of the village men consider that the young man is getting ideas above his station, and should accept the male lot; the others are supporting him. Kathli is well aware what Yann is doing, but does not object: She considers the youngster intelligent and compassionate, and feels he could well become almost as good a sorcerer as a woman. Yann's personal feelings are that he is 'as subtle as any woman'.

Yann is being successfully courted by Veri, from the Greenwich, who considers that she has caught one of the nicest young men in the village.

Note: Many players will react negatively to Yann, considering him to be a wimp, at best. Yann will not understand their feelings: other members of the village may consider that the party are being reactionary, in trying to keep men in their places!!

Arnuss

Arnuss, originally, was a warrior in the Sohthorian militia, but left a few years ago, to obtain the far better position he now holds. He tries to keep his low background to himself. It is generally known in the village that Arnuss is Ylissa's lover.

The Smithy:

The Smithy is a small, smokey building near the river. It is occupied by Rensi the village midwife, her husband Unlarr the smith, and a large scarred ginger tom, Tiger, who is lacking one ear and one eye.

Rensi

Rensi is the village midwife, and, as such, one of the most important and respected members of the community, ranking beside Mother Calhia and Lady Kathli. She is tall, imposing, but regarded as somewhat masculine in her looks and manner: She is too direct and forward, preferring to use strength rather than subtlety to solve problems. This is regarded with some dislike: a woman is, after all, expected to be feminine. [Think about people's reactions to an effeminate man!!]

Rensi's children have all gone to Charmby to seek their fortune.

Unlarr

Unlarr is an intelligent and compassionate man now in his mid-fifties, who was cursed with undue strength: this has soured him somewhat, since everyone sees his muscles first, and assumes he is merely a warrior, rather than having any



real virtues. He trained as a smith, so that he would have a useful profession, and is now a competent and valued member of the village. His large form is often seen in the Greenwich, where he tends to sit and talk politics to anyone who will listen. This is his attempt to show he is more than just a strong man.

The Greenwich Inn:

The Greenwich Inn is a large, stone building near the bridge. The inn sign shows a green-skinned crone with a hooked nose amidst a field of wheat. The inn is run by Phanli and her husband Rann, plus their daughters.

Also at the inn are a couple of cats, Jerr and Rumm, who specialise in stealing food and smashing crockery.

Phanli

Phanli is a buxom, rosy-cheeked woman in her early forties, with a permanent smile and a welcoming manner. She runs the Greenwich efficiently and well, and it is a popular drinking spot. Her cider is amongst the best in Sohthor. She is naturally cheerful and kindly, and is always ready to talk to visitors. She is also the village gossip, and an excellent source of information.

Rann

Rann is a dour-faced man who is completely over-shadowed by his wife. He is hard-working, doing all the heavy jobs at the inn, but is difficult to talk to, and has a reputation for grouching.

Chala

Phanli's eldest daughter, Chala, is an attractive and eligible young woman, who has been courting Vandar for the last twelve months, with little success. This is disappointing her; Vandar is a handsome

man, and Peach Farm would be an excellent property to obtain.

Veri

Chala's younger sister, Veri, is learning sorcery with Lady Kathli, and is considered to have a bright future ahead of her. She is, though, a quiet girl, who suffers from a slight limp due to an accident when she was younger. She dislikes attention, and tends to keep herself to herself. The party may notice her slipping out to the mill at night for assignments with Yann.

In The Greenwich Inn:

The party will find that the village is buzzing with the current events. Various people are expounding theories at the bar. One old boy is loudly pointing out that this is the wrath of the Earth Goddess, who is angry that a male is trying to run a farm without female control. A woman is arguing that "that blasted monster is to blame - it's obviously his work!". When the party are noticed entering the inn, though, conversation will cease, apart from a few whispered comments ("Ugh! What are they doing here?"). The general attitude at the inn is that adventurers, and in particular warriors, are scum. The landlady, though, will welcome the party, and will find them rooms.

After a few minutes, the atmosphere in the inn will thaw somewhat, especially if the party let it be known why they are here, and they can strive to gather information. In particular, the "monster" that the woman above was blaspheming about will turn out to be the minotaur Thoris. Also, Mother Calhia, the priestess, will talk to the party. As far as she is concerned, the Earth Goddess would take no part in such acts of barbarity.

The Second Day:

The party should turn in and get some sleep (they have had a tiring day's journey). Nothing happens during the night except that the news of the party's presence spreads all round the village. The party will be recognised by everyone from now onwards.

In the morning, the party should be encouraged to wander round the village and talk to people, getting to know who the villagers are.

From here onwards, events will depend to an extent on the actions of the party. However, certain encounters and events will occur:

The Warrior And His Force:

Sometime that day, the party will hear horses approaching the village. A second group of adventurers have just arrived, led by Sigmund. They were in Charmby and learned of the monster in Jelliclo, and have come to deal with it.

They approached Lady Kathli, who told them that the PCs are dealing with the problem: she also said that Sigmund was not welcome (due to Angharad's religion, among other things). Despite this, they will also take rooms at the Greenwich (which is now bursting at the





seams - this number of travellers is unheard of). Sigmund will seek to pump the party for all the information available.

As the scenario continues, the GM should ensure that there is friction between Sigmund's party and the PCs. (Professional rivalry!). This should sooner or later erupt into violence. When this happens, assuming the PCs do not kill Sigmund's party outright, Lady Kathli will be summoned, and will berate both parties for violence, before banishing Sigmund's Party from the village. (This assumes that Sigmund's party is seen to be in the wrong. If the PCs are in the wrong, Kathli will banish **both** parties). If they return openly, they will be fined and deported.

Needless to say, Sigmund will not just leave tamely; he will want revenge. He and his friends will turn up at some inconvenient moment later on, such as when the party are trying to win Larissa's trust...

Sigmund

Sigmund was originally a soldier in a nearby state, but he deserted (something which he doesn't talk about!). He is not particularly handsome, but acts every inch the tough, commanding warrior. He is straightforward and direct, with little subtlety. He is cautious, but can be goaded into violence. He assumes that women will fall at his feet, and considers Sohldhorian women must be either blind or lesbian.

Einarr

Einarr is a tall, skinny man in his late twenties, who has little faith in his own abilities. He normally lets **Sigmund** or **Angharad** take the lead, and finds the Sohldhorian assumption that he is as good (if not better) than Sigmund startling - and actually quite pleasant. He is also pleasantly surprised that Sohldhorian women show any interest in him (because he is a sorcerer); in his home state, most women prefer warriors to sorcerers.

He has a familiar, **Skraal**, a raven.

Angharad

Angharad is a scheming, unpleasant priestess, with a delight in violence. She is bold and cold-blooded. She is not in tune with Sohldhorian attitudes, though she feels she would like to be (or more accurately, she would like Sohldhorian values to be closer to hers). She also feels that Sohldhorian men are all wimps. It is likely that she will consider tough men in the players' party to be the first **Real** men she's seen since she got here, and start making eyes at them; She will use any response as a means to gain information from the man she seduces. She is not particularly attractive, but has a strong personality.

The Angry Old Man:

When the party approach West Farm, Talliu will accost them and accuse them of theft. Someone has stolen his pouch of silver, with which he pays for ale at the inn. He is very angry and will not accept any denials of guilt. The money was gone from his room in the farmhouse when he

looked for it last night. It was definitely there the night before.

The party will be rescued from his accusations by Janarta. She will persuade Talliu to leave the party alone, but will ask them herself if they have seen the money. (It has actually been stolen by Macavity) Janarta will let the party investigate in the farmhouse if they so wish: **sharp eyes** may spot a few ginger hairs by Talliu's window.

If the party ask around, they will learn that there have been other thefts locally in the last few days. (Needless to say, this is a complete red herring).

Just A Minotaur:

Sooner or later, the party will talk to **Thoris**, the minotaur. Thoris is becoming aware that he is a prime suspect for the current events, and is getting jumpy. In his homeland, such a suspicion would be sufficient to get a monster killed on the spot. If the party are even remotely rough in questioning him, he will suddenly panic and run, making for the woodlands near the village, intending to disappear into the depths until the village calms down and the adventurers leave. If the party pursue him, he will assume that they are going to kill him, and will turn and fight to defend himself. If the party kill or seriously injure him, they will have broken Sohldhorian law, and are liable to be hauled up before Lady Kathli for their crimes. She will not be amused. The sentence she gives is up to the referee; the party should not get off lightly. Thoris enjoys the same protection under the law as any other citizen, and Kathli will not accept defences such as "Well, he was only a monster, wasn't he?"

If the party do not catch Thoris, he will hide in the woods for some time, before creeping back into the village to obtain food that night. He might be mistaken for the monster by a jumpy party.

If Sigmund's party talk to Thoris first, he will definitely flee, with Sigmund and friends in vain pursuit. Later on, he will creep back into the village to ask the players' party to protect him. (This should have a faintly ridiculous air to it!).

The Seductress:

During the afternoon, **Teega** will go to see the weretiger **Larissa**, to order her to strike again tonight. Once she is sure that Larissa will oblige, she will send **Lani**, her daughter, to get to know one of the player characters. Lani will pick the most appealing male (not necessarily the most physically handsome, but the nicest personality) and get him on his own by some ruse (eg. by suggesting that she has valuable information for him). She will then endeavor to seduce him. If her chosen victim seems suspicious of her motives, she will explain that Sohldhorian men are all wimps, and that he is the first **Real** man she has seen in months. She doesn't believe this, but she assumes it will convince a thick barbarian warrior from abroad. Assuming she is successful (and she is not unattractive) she will take the opportunity to pump him for information on the party's plans, and will subtly slip him some false information about the location of the weretiger. (In

particular, she will tell him that she has seen strange sights near the temple at night, and also suggest that he investigate the terrible twins!). Her basic aim is to ensure that the party are nowhere near Vandar's farm tonight.

Assuming she is successful with the player characters, she will later on try the same trick on Sigmund (with complete success).

That Night:

As ordered, Larissa will attack Vandar's lands again tonight. The other party are not in the vicinity; they are all watching Kathli's estate. **Lani** has ensured that they are suspicious of the twins. If the party are in the vicinity, Larissa will endeavour to escape - she will not attack them. Larissa should get clean away, leaving only paw prints, some shredded chicken, and damaged orange trees.

One more attack such as this will bankrupt Vandar. However, careful investigation will find paw prints identical to those at **Peach Farm** leading out of the millpond near **West Farm** (remember that tigers enjoy swimming - Larissa was trying to clean herself up).

The Ex-Slave's Tale:

At some stage, **Ranth** will come to talk to the party. (Use this if the party have not gained any leads pointing them towards Teega). Ranth is suspicious that something is going on out at Riverside Farm; he doesn't know precisely what, and his fears are becoming exaggerated. He now believes that the Sohldhorian sorceresses have discovered some means for women to reproduce without men, and are planning to exterminate all men. He fears that Teega is organising the extermination in Jelliclo.

Of course, Ranth is completely wrong, and the GM should play Ranth so that he appears as irrational as he actually is. What he can do, though, is tell the party about secret meetings where he has heard snippets of conversation such as "I'll get her to finish that man off" and "He'll get what is coming to him".

Meeting The Monster:

Sooner or later, one or the other party will go to investigate **Larissa**. If she realises that they know she is the weretiger, she will change form, and bolt into the woodlands. It is strongly recommended that Larissa make good her escape, if need be after a half-hearted attack on her questioners. Larissa will "know" now that she cannot remain in Jelliclo: She will be very bitter at being driven from her home. The party should figure out that she will want revenge on the woman who betrayed her. If they do not, Teega will go to them and ask for protection. She will also ask Sigmund and friends for protection (even if they have been banished), hoping that they will kill Larissa for her, to destroy the evidence.

The Final Battle:

This may well take place at Riverside Farm when Larissa comes to get her revenge on Teega. It is up to the party what they intend to do. Sigmund's party





will be watching Riverside Farm, intending to kill Larissa and gain the kudos for her death. Teega will also try to get Larissa killed (to cover up her actions). Larissa wants to kill Teega, but she also wants to stay alive, and will not stay if the battle is obviously going against her. If the PCs try to protect Larissa (as they should), Sigmund and friends will turn on the party for trying to protect 'the monster'.

Outcome:

The final solution of this scenario is up to the party. The real villains are **Teega** and **Sigmund's** party; Larissa is a victim of circumstance. The villagers, if matters are explained to them, could be persuaded to accept Larissa, despite what she is. Larissa doesn't want to be 'cured' of her 'affliction'. She enjoys running as a tiger. Teega's fate is up to the party; death is probably a little harsh, but some lesser punishment is in order. Certainly the other villagers will not approve of her actions - while Vandar is not considered quite respectable in trying to run the farm on his own, he certainly should be allowed a fair chance. Kathli will probably not be too angry if the party massacre Sigmund and friends (though she will not approve). If they do survive, she will order the PCs to escort them to the port, where they will be deported (if the party haven't annoyed Kathli too much, they will be paid for this).

Referee's Notes:

The referee should use the various characters to keep the action in this scenario moving, and to keep the players off balance. Perhaps most useful for this are the terrible twins, who spend much of the game following the party around and making snide comments, generally being awkward, and finding both groups of adventurers endless sources of amusement. They are also likely to get themselves into serious trouble sooner or later - **Angharad**, for a start, will not be amused and may well lose her temper with them: Lady Kathli will not be pleased if the PCs do nothing to help her daughters.

The referee should also ensure the players have a long list of suspects, from the twins to Mother Calhia. Don't let them find Larissa immediately; make it clear that each successful attack is more vicious and violent than the last, and get the party seriously worried about the weretiger.

Most importantly, though, don't let the players forget where they are. Ensure that the odd incident or person jars, reminding them that Sohldhor is not a typical society...

Statistics:

Lady Kathli

RQ:

STR: 11 CON: 9 SIZ: 10
INT: 18 POW: 21 DEX: 15
APP: 10 Move: 3 Hits: 10
Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4
Abdomen: 0/4
Magic Points: 21, Fatigue Points: 20

Spells: Animate Stone 74%,

Apprentice-ship Bonding 86%, Dominate Human 100%, Glow 71%, Hinder 100%, Homing Circle 46%, Neutralize Magic 100%, Magic Points Matrix Enhancement 100%, Phantom Sight 100%, Protective Circle 91%, Spell Matrix Enchantment 84%, Spell Resistance, 89%, Teleport 101%.

[These are the spells Kathli normally carries in mind; given time, she has access to any spell she might want].

Skills: Fast Talk 84%, Orate 96%, Sing 45%, Evaluate 78%, Human Lore 92%, Read/Write 90%, Devise 51%, Intensity 102%, Duration 99%, Range 100%, Multispell 98%, Ceremony 100%, Summoning 32%, Enchanting 104%.

Dagger: (1d4) SR8, 24%, Parry 29%, 6 points.

AD&D: AC3; Lvl 10; HP25; Mage; Human Female; NG.

STR: 11 INT: 18 WIS: 15
DEX: 15 CON: 9 CHA: 16
+2 Dagger; +2 Cloak; Bracers AC6

Spell Book: All first to third

4th Level: Confusion, Dig, Enchanted Weapon, Fear, Fire Charm, Wizard Eye.

5th Level: Hold Monster, Passwall, Stone Shape, Telekinesis, Teleport.

Familiar: Black Cat, called Deuteronomy; AC7, 4HP.

Hali and Hanli

RQ: Both.

STR: 10 CON: 12 SIZ: 12
INT: 16 POW: 16 DEX: 14
APP: 16 Move: 3 Hits: 12
Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4
Abdomen: 0/4

Magic Points: 16, **Fatigue Points:** 22

Hali:

Spells: Animate Stone 14%, Glow 21%, Phantom Sight 19%, Protective Circle 20%, Treat Wounds 19%.

Skills: Climb 46%, Dodge 28%, Ride 12%, Throw 26%, First Aid 23%, Human Lore 28%, Read/Write 54%, Orate 17%, Sleight 15%, Play Lute 22%.

Dagger: (1d4) SR8, 24%, Parry 19%, 6 points.

Hanli:

Spells: Cast Back 23%, Fly 18%, Mystic Vision 19%, Stupefaction 24%, Telepathy 22%.

Skills: Climb 46%, Dodge 31%, Ride 15%, Throw 25%, First Aid 18%, Human Lore 28%, Read/Write 54%, Orate 14%, Play Lute 22%, Sneak 32%.

Dagger: (1d4) SR8, 23%, Parry 20%, 6 points.

AD&D: AC9; Lvl 1; HP3; Mage; Human Female; CG.

STR: 10 INT: 16 WIS: 9
DEX: 14 CON: 12 CHA: 12

+1 Dagger each. +1 Ring of protection each. Hali has a *Brooch of Protection* against *Sleep*. Hanli has a *Brooch of Shielding*. (These are identical in appearance).

Hali's Spell Book: Burning Hands, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Magic Missile, Push.

Hanli's Spell Book: Enlarge, Light,

Shield, Sleep, Ventriloquism.

Larissa

RQ:

STR: 11/27 CON: 9/17 SIZ: 10/27
INT: 11/11 POW: 12/12 DEX: 15/15
APP: 14/- Move: 3/8 Hits: 10/22
Fatigue Points: 20/44

Human:

Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4
Abdomen: 0/4

Tiger:

RH Leg: 2/6, LH Leg: 2/6
RF Leg: 2/6, LF Leg: 2/6, Head: 2/8
Hind Quarters: 2/10, Forequarters: 2/10
Skills: Dodge 12%/45%, Jump 34%/62%, Hide 68%, Sneak 74%, Climb 42%, Swim 33%/68%, Sing 34%, First Aid 38%, Animal Lore 35%, Listen 36%, Track 13%/56%.

Bite: (1d10+2d6) SR8, 45%.

Claw: (1d8+2d6) SR5, 65%.

Rip: (2d8+2d6) SR5, 80%. (only if both claws hit).

Dagger: (1d4+2) SR8, 29%, Parry 31%, 6 points.

AD&D: AC3; 6d8+2; 39HP; Human Female/Weretiger; NG.

STR: 11/27 INT: 11/11 WIS: 13
DEX: 15/15 CON: 9/17 CHA: 12
2 Claws @ 1-4; Bite @ 1-12.

Only hit by +1 or better weapons.

Teega

RQ:

STR: 13 CON: 14 SIZ: 9
INT: 16 POW: 16 DEX: 12
APP: 9 Move: 3 Hits: 12
Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4
Abdomen: 0/4

Magic Points: 16, **Fatigue Points:** 27

Spells: Apprentice Bonding 38%, Create Familiar (INT) 56%, Glow 78%, Holdfast 56%, Treat Wounds 83%.

Skills: Intensity 82%, Duration 76%, Range 36%, Read/Write 87%, Orate 34%, Farming 87%, First Aid 44%, Human Lore 62%, Animal Lore 78%, Plant Lore 81%, Listen 38%.

Unarmed: but could use a knife if necessary at 15%.

AD&D: AC10; Lvl 6; HP19; Mage; Human Female; LN/E.

STR: 13 INT: 16 WIS: 9
DEX: 12 CON: 14 CHA: 14

Spell Book:

1st Level: Affect Normal Fires; Dancing Lights; Enlarge; Feather Fall; Hold Portal; Jump; Light; Magic Missile; Mending; Sleep; Unseen Servant.

2nd Level: Continual Light; Forget; Invisibility; Knock; Levitate; Magic Mouth; Mirror Image; Web; Wizard Lock.

3rd Level: Dispel Magic; Fly; Hold Person; Phantasmal Force; Suggestion; Tongues.

Lani

RQ: Sorceress: Apprenticed to Teega.

STR: 10 CON: 9 SIZ: 10
INT: 14 POW: 15 DEX: 15
APP: 16 Move: 3 Hits: 10
Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4





Abdomen: 0/4

Magic Points: 15, Fatigue Points: 19

Spells: Diminish CON 23%, Enhance APP 25%, Stupefaction 19%.

Skills: Courtesan 48%, Dodge 24%, Jump 31%, Ride 12%, Fast Talk 42%, Sing 36%, First Aid 19%, Human Lore 23%, World Lore 27%, Read/Write 42%, Conceal 26%, Sleight 19%, Listen 29%, Hide 14%, Sneak 18%.

AD&D: AC7; Lvl 1; HP3; Hour; Human Female; CN.

STR: 10 INT: 14 WIS: 9
DEX: 15 CON: 9 CHA: 16

Bracers: AC8.

Spell Book: Kiss of Sleeping, Silvertongue, Impotence, Fascination.

Thoris

RQ: Minotaur

STR: 24 CON: 16 SIZ: 24
INT: 8 POW: 10 DEX: 12
APP: 7 Move: 5 Hits: 20
Right Leg: 4/7, Left Leg: 4/7, Chest: 3/8
Right Arm: 3/6, Left Arm: 3/6, Head: 3/7
Abdomen: 4/7

Magic Points: 8, Fatigue Points: 40

Spells: Heal III, Repair II.

Skills: Track 54%, Hide 34%, Sneak 28%.

Head Butt: (1d6+2d6) SR6, 44%.

Improvised Club: (1d6+2d6) SR5, 28%, Parry 21%, 4 points.

(Thoris does not normally carry a weapon; only give him a club if he is forced to defend himself and there is something suitable in reach).

AD&D: AC6; 6d8+3; HP37; Male Minotaur; CN.

STR: 24 INT: 8 WIS: 10
DEX: 12 CON: 16 CHA: 8

Unarmed: Headbutt for 2-8/bite for 1-4, or club for 1-6 (if there is a suitable weapon in reach).

Sigmund

RQ:

STR: 14 CON: 13 SIZ: 15
INT: 13 POW: 11 DEX: 11
APP: 13 Move: 3 Hits: 14
Right Leg: 2/5, Left Leg: 2/5, Chest: 5/6
Right Arm: 1/4, Left Arm: 1/4, Head: 6/5
Abdomen: 5/5

Magic Points: 11, Fatigue Points: 27

Spells: Bladesharp II, Countermagic II, Disruption, Heal.

Skills: Ride 56%, Throw 39%, First Aid 61%, Orate 26%, Human Lore 24%, Conceal 15%, Devise 31%, Listen 56%, Scan 43%, Track 38%, Hide 31%.

Broad Sword: (1d8+1+1d4) SR7, 43%, Parry 46%, 10 points.

Long Bow: (1d8+1+1d4) 1/SR, 36%, 6 points.

Shield: (1d4+1d4) SR8, Parry 48%, 12 points.

AD&D: AC4; Level 5; HP36; Fighter; Human Male; NE.

STR: 14 INT: 13 WIS: 12
DEX: 11 CON: 13 CHA: 16

+1 Broad Sword. Ring of Feather Falling.

Einarr

RQ: Adept Sorcerer.

STR: 7 CON: 10 SIZ: 13

INT: 17 POW: 19 DEX: 15
APP: 10 Move: 3 Hits: 12

Right Leg: 0/4, Left Leg: 0/4, Chest: 0/5
Right Arm: 0/3, Left Arm: 0/3, Head: 0/4

Abdomen: 0/4

Magic Points: 19, Fatigue Points: 18

Spells: Animate Stone 35%, Damage Boosting 82%, Diminish 79%, Fly 67%, Dominate Spirit 56%, Glow 66%, Stupefaction 55%, Treat Wound 79%.

Skills: Climb 35%, Dodge 44%, Ride 53%, Fast Talk 32%, Read/Write 78%, Evaluate 51%, First Aid 34%, Human Lore 89%, Hide 35%, Intensity 81%, Range 88%, Duration 72%, Multispell 67%.

Rapier: (1d6+1) SR7, 21%, Parry 23%, 8 points.

Dagger: (1d4+2) SR8, 22%, Parry 31%, 6 points.

AD&D: AC7; Level 5; HP16; Mage; Human Male; LN.

STR: 8 INT: 17 WIS: 9
DEX: 15 CON: 10 CHA: 10

+1 Dagger. +2 Ring of Protection.

Spell Book:

1st Level: Burning Hands, Comprehend Languages, Detect Magic, Enlarge, Hold Portal, Jump, Light, Magic Missile, Shield, Shocking Grasp, Sleep, Spider Climb, Tenser's Floating Disc.

2nd Level: Continual Light, Darkness 15' Radius, Detect Invisibility, Fools Gold, Invisibility, Knock, Levitate, Magic Mouth, Mirror Image, Web, Wizard Lock.

3rd Level: Dispel Magic, Explosive Runes, Fireball, Flame Arrow, Fly, Lightning Bolt, Monster Summoning I, Protection from Normal Missiles.

Angharad

RQ: Priestess of War/Death God (eg. Zorak Zoran!)

STR: 14 CON: 15 SIZ: 13
INT: 15 POW: 16 DEX: 12
APP: 12 Move: 3 Hits: 14

Right Leg: 2/5, Left Leg: 2/5, Chest: 5/6
Right Arm: 1/4, Left Arm: 1/4, Head: 6/5
Abdomen: 5/5

Magic Points: 16, Fatigue Points: 29

Spells: Command Shade, Crush II, Create Zombie, Fear, Dismiss Magic, Berserk, Midlink III, Summon Shade.

Skills: Dodge 23%, Jump 32%, Ride 46%, Orate 45%, Ceremony 55%, Read/Write 79%, Evaluate 5%, Human Lore 45%, Listen 44%, Track 61%, Sneak 43%, Summoning 48%.

Heavy Mace: (1d10) SR2, 57%, Parry 39%, 10 points.

Quarterstaff: (1d8) SR1, 54%, Parry 45%, 8 points.

AD&D: AC4; Lvl 5; HP37; Cleric; Human Female; LE.

STR: 14 INT: 15 WIS: 17
DEX: 12 CON: 15 CHA: 15

+1 Mace. Bag of Holding.

Spells Memorized:

1st Level: Command, Command, Cure Light Wounds, Protection From Evil, Sanctuary.

2nd Level: Hold Person, Hold Person, Know Alignment, Silence 15' Radius, Speak with Animals.

3rd Level: Animate Dead, Prayer.

Typical Cat (familiar).

RQ:

STR: 3 CON: 12 SIZ: 3
INT: 5(8) POW: 12 DEX: 20
Move: 7 Hits: 8

RH Leg: 0/3, LH Leg: 0/3

RF Leg: 0/3, LF Leg: 0/3, Head: 0/3

Hind Quarters: 0/4, Fore Quarters: 0/4

(Magic Points: 12), Fatigue Points: 15

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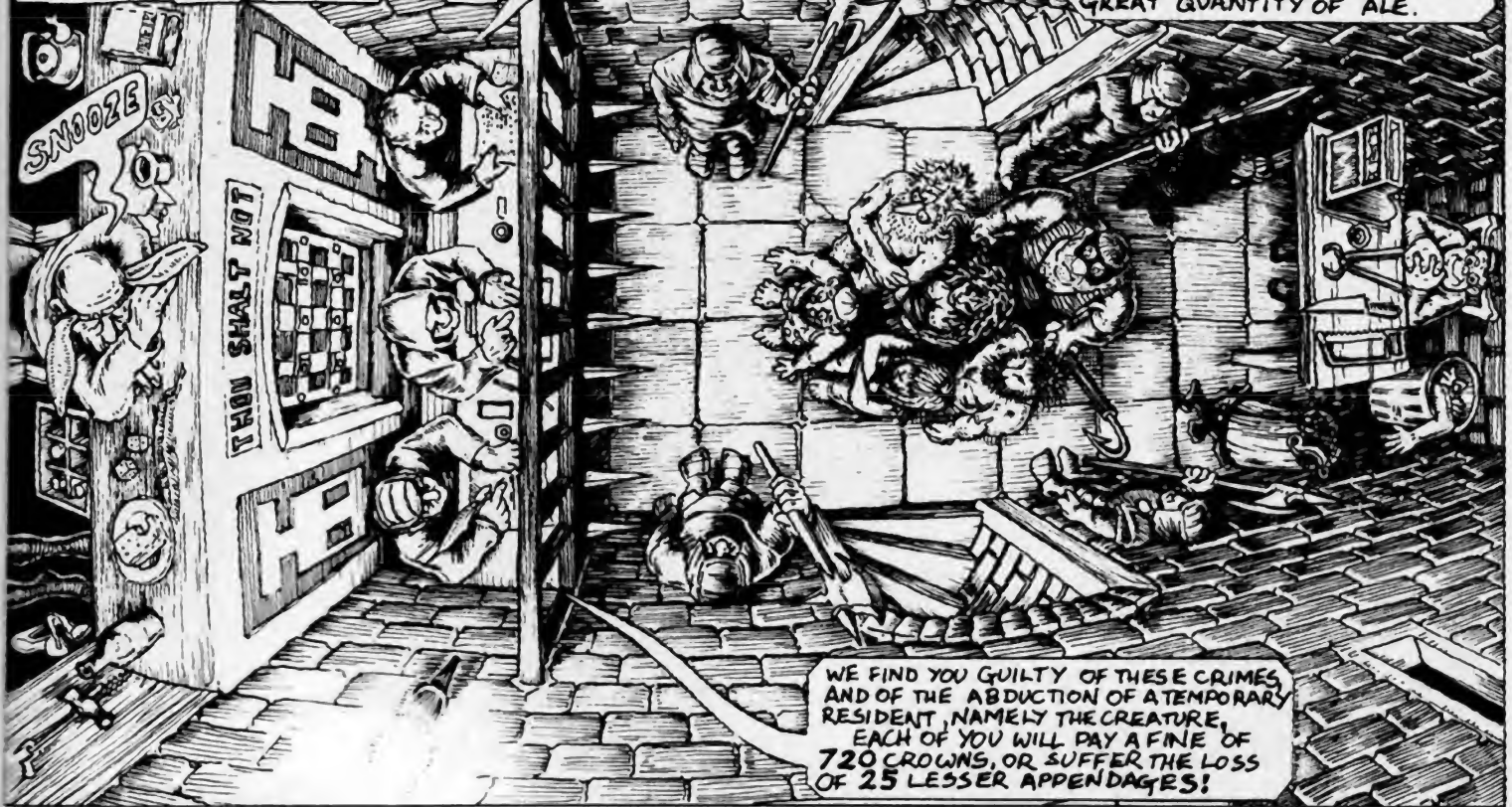
The boxed set provides solid basic play mechanics that were over 2 years in playtesting. Rules provided for modern firearms, NBC weapons and protections, mutations, survival, high technology and more. The game allows the referee to decide the nature of the holocaust that destroyed the world in which play will occur. Aftermath is for 2-6 players and a referee. It is a role playing excursion into a post holocaust world.

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A DISHEVELLED BUNCH OF PRISONERS ARE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURT AFTER MERE WEEKS IN GAOL. THE ARCHJUDICIAR FORQUE PRESIDES OVER THE AFFAIRS WEARING THE TRADITIONAL ASSES EARS OF WISDOM.

CASE NUMBER MCLXIV.... A MR. WHEK AND HIS ACCOMPLICES THE REVEREND A. AMBSACE, AMBERGRIS OF LOCK BEND, FEY AND WOWSER SPUDHERD, ARE CHARGED WITH VARIOUS PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES.....

...RELATING TO A DISTURBANCE AT THE ONCE BITTEN INN, INVOLVING THE MYSTERIOUS APPEARANCE AND SUBSEQUENT DISAPPEARANCE OF A CREATURE WHICH DISPOSED OF MOST OF THE CLIENTEL, A NUMBER OF PASSERSBY, AND A GREAT QUANTITY OF ALE.



WE FIND YOU GUILTY OF THESE CRIMES AND OF THE ABDUCTION OF A TEMPORARY RESIDENT, NAMELY THE CREATURE. EACH OF YOU WILL PAY A FINE OF 720 CROWNS, OR SUFFER THE LOSS OF 25 LESSER APPENDAGES!

Once bitten

© R. PARRY '87

HOWEVER, THE COURT IS WILLING TO SUSPEND THE SENTENCE ON CONDITION THAT YOU DEAL SIMILARLY WITH THE TWELVE OTHER CREATURES THAT HAVE APPEARED IN THE TOWN.

DOES THIS MEET WITH YOUR APPROVAL M'LUD?

NOD NOD

I SEE IT DOES.....



EVEN IF I HAD MY EQUIPMENT THERE IS LITTLE I COULD DO WITH TWELVE!

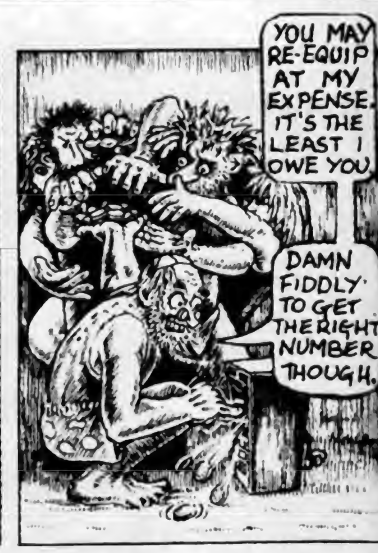
PRESENTLY YOU WILL BE TAKEN WHERE YOU MAY REGAIN YOUR POSSESSIONS...



TO ENSURE YOUR COMPLIANCE WITH M'LORD'S WISHES, AN AGENT OF THE COURT WILL ACCOMPANY YOU. WHILST IN MORTIFU'S CUSTODY, ANY ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE OR EVADE WILL CAUSE SUDDEN DEATH!



THE FACE LOOKS FAMILIAR, BUT THE GEAR DOESN'T







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DA6 Crossbowman	DA37 Ninja
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DA9 Adventuress	DA40 Ranger
DA10 Trader	DA41 Fighter
Elves	DA42 Paladin
DA11 Magic-User	DA43 Anti-Paladin
DA12 in Plate-mail	DA44 Asgardian
DA13 Elf Lord	DA45 Samurai
DA14 Half Elf	DA46 Half Goblin
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DA16 Adventuress	DA48 Warrior Priest
DA18 High Elf	DA51 Adventuress
DA19 Female High Elf	DA52 Female Thief
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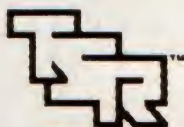
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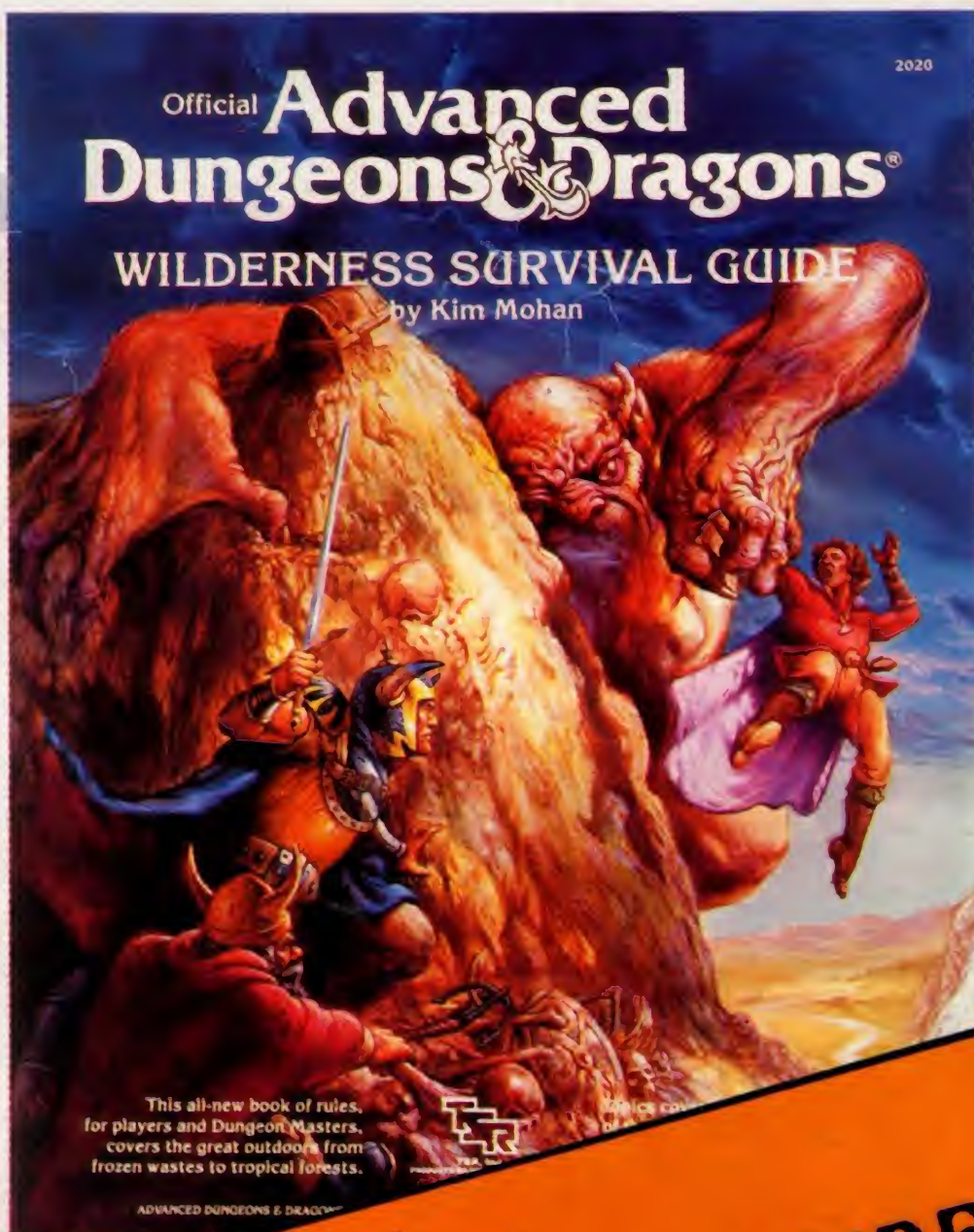
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